

MEROE, OROMO AND OLD NUBIAN: SOLVING THE MYSTERY OF MEROITIC LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Meroitic language is one of the most controversial ancient languages but one of the few having advanced writing systems. Some classify it Asian, European, non-African, Semitic, or 'unclassified'. This paper contends Meroe, similar to their Cushitic friends, are left victims of preconceived ideas based on an entirely argument from silence, an hegemonic epistemology that elevates a single perspective and silences other(s). This paper, thus, comparatively analyzes Meroitic and Old Nubian lexical and grammatical items with corresponding Oromo, a Cushitic family which, many classical and contemporary philologists/linguists argue derives from a unique vocabulary possibly the Ancient language of the Nile Valley and/or Horn of Africa. Meroitic and Old Nubian lexical, grammatical and epigraphic data were collected from secondary sources by Meroitic researchers. Oromo corpora are obtained both from classical and modern descriptions and native-speakers. Results indicate Oromo lexemes show significant level of cognates with not only Meroitic and Old Nubian, but also with the Ancient Egyptian to their northern part.

Keywords: Oromo, Meroe, Nubian, Ancient Egyptian, Cushitic

1. INTRODUCTION

The Meroitic kingdom, called in various 'syntax' such as "Kerma", "Napata", "Meroe", "Alodia", "Nubians", "Ethiopians", sustains as much grandiose history as, unfortunately, gloomy. On the one hand, there is "unanimous opinion of the Ancients that Egypt is merely a colony of Ethiopia, that is Sudanese Meroitic", "the birthplace of humanity" (Diop 1975: 56), "people we must attribute the origin of sculpture, the use of written symbols, in short, the start of all the developments that make up an advanced civilization" (Chérubini 1847: 2-3 quoted by Diop *ibid*). Moreover, scholars agree that the Meroe are acknowledged as the first, in human history, to design, out of their pre-existing pictographic style, an advanced cursive, alphabetic writing system, traced at least to 200 BC

(http://www.arkamani.org/meroitic_studies/rilly.htm)). Archeological findings also show us that this kingdom or the area was the most industrially advanced—in pottery, brick and iron use, animal and plant breeding, etc.—in the pre-historic times (Fattovich 1990; Fattovich et al 2000; Phillipson 1993, 2005). Houston (1926), James (1954) and Diop (1975) stress, exploiting multi-disciplinary data and resources, that the Ancient Cushites ruled over three continents (Africa, Asia, Europe), introduced to the whole world worshipping God, government, science, philosophy, epigraphy and, in general, civilization.

Nevertheless, Meroitic language/civilization is yet described as ‘unclassified’, ‘unknown’, ‘undeciphered’, ‘a myth’, and so forth. Greenberg categorically asserted that ‘the [Meroitic] language does not appear to be related to any existing language of Africa’ (1950: 391) and is ‘unclassified’ (1966). Griffith (1909: 54), the pioneer of Meroitic research, suggested Meroitic could be related to the Nilo-Saharan, Nubian, the Hamitic or to the ‘negro’ group of languages, or even to the Semitic. Later, Griffith (1911) shifted his belief and said Meroitic might be an older form of the Nubian language. Hinze (1973, cited in Winters 1984) suggested Meroitic is Ural Altaic. Within African language phyla, some classify Meroitic under Nilo-Saharan (Trigger 1964, 1977; Bender 1981; Hintze 1989; Peust 1999; Aubin 2003). Still, some (Meinhof, 1921; Zyhlarz 1930; 1956, cited in Rowan 2006) classify it under ‘primitive Hamitic’. Hintze (1955: 72) rejected these scholars alleging them to have ‘manipulated their data’ and instead supported Greenberg’s. Yet, others put it under Semitic (Griffith 1911) or East Sudanic (Bender 1981).

Still, some tell us gloomy future that it is yet to be deciphered if we can know it exactly (Rilly 2004). On the other hand we are told that scholars already deciphered it in the early decades of the 20th century (Griffith 1909; Sayce 1913). Militarev (1984 cited in Rowan 2006), a Russian scholar, hypothesizes that Meroitic may be a member of the Afroasiatic language family. Almost, none, however, categorize it with either ancient Egyptian or Cushitic or, even, Nubian.

Only in rare case do some *speculate* it might be an ancestor to 'Old Nubian' (Rowan 2006; Aubin 2003). The problems still is Old Nubian, said to have 'lived' 8th – 15th CE, is taken as the direct ancestor of the Nubian language spoken today in Sudan of what was the area of the Meroitic Kingdom (Browne 1996, 2002), but is doubted or rejected, with no explanatory evidence, as descendant of Meroitic by the same European scholars. Rilly (2004), thus, concludes the main problem with Meroitic is to find related languages, ancient or modern, which are known. Further problem arises when Euro-Semitic scholars, in a wildish prejudice, ~~describe~~ "have gone further to suggest that the concept of a Cushitic language family is not useful" (Bernal 2006: 75 points to Bender 1975: 219; Hudson 1978: 3–4; Ehret 1978; Hetzron 1978: 57; Orel & Stolbova cited in Blench 1994: 6) and, in Bernal's own words, a "*hypothetical* branch of Afroasiatic situated in the Horn of Africa" (Bernal 2006: 699; emphasis added). Worse than his own colonial 'god-fathers', Bernal (1987), the staunch accuser of European scholars for anti-Semitism and Semitists for their 'cultural and geographic inferiority complex', is apparently conjuring up inexistence of, past and present, a language or language-family called 'Cushitic'.

Even the current Ethiopian regime, not to mention the former ultra-Semitist or Abyssinianist ones, teaches Ethiopian school children that "the first writing system was invented in Sumer, in modern Iraq in around 4000BC", then in "China, India and Arab" worlds (FDRE 2011: 42), while, in contrast, scholars confirmed long ago that the Laga Oda scriptures of Oromia (Eastern Ethiopia), that cuts parallel with Meroitic and Egyptian pictographs in signs, styles and themes, for instance, dates back to "predynastic and protodynastic Egypt" (Cervicek 1971: 132). Even they are not ready to mention the fact that the "earliest to write about language and the brain... the first to write about anything at all" were Ancient "Egyptian" (Altmann 2006: 802).

Thus, this paper contends that the Meroe and their Cushitic friends are left victims of what Bernal (1987) himself calls Aryan-Europeanists' *argument from*

silence, an ideological stereotype that elevates a single perspective and, in tandem, silences information from other sources. It also contends that Meroitic must be analyzed from Cushitic perspective as an African phylum.

2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1. EGYPTIAN, MEROITIC, NUBIAN AND CUSHITIC: "BLESS OF ANCESTRAL SPIRIT" OR "CURSE OF HAM"?

Notwithstanding the historians of philosophy's general agreement in ancient Cushite (commonly known as 'Egyptian') origin of civilization, browsing the related literature, one can observe that there is considerable dishonesty, obfuscation at work about the Meroe or Meroitic. One might well wonder why and how Cushitic cannot explain the 'mystery' of Meroitic civilization and language. Or, do 'scholars' unwittingly and/or intentionally obfuscate facts? Crabtree, an Egyptologist, once wrote in a letter to his Egyptology students:

There is a very wide field for study which has been too curtly set aside, merely because the adjacent story of Egypt has possessed written records whilst the Galla [=Oromo] story has none. The weaker is made to suffer by preconceived ideas based on an entirely one-sided view of the case--the Egyptian view point; and these remarks are an earnest plea for independent study from the African point of view (Crabtree 1924: 253-254).

Crabtree stresses that "Oromo", "contemptuously called Galla", is "possibly the language of the Anti ['ancient Egyptian'] or... possibly even Hittite" (ibid: 255). This critical scholar goes on to problematize that "the Egyptian form Wawat", which appears in record since the time of "Pepy I... 2650 B.C." is "often asserted by Italians that [they] were ancestors of the [Oromo]". He emphasizes that, since time immemorial, Oromos occupied across "the Somali coast (Punt)-roughly in a line Kerma, Napata, Meroe, Blue Nile, Shoa, Zeila" (ibid). He further reminds us that, Oromos are whose great leader expelled "the Hyksos, circ. 1600 B.C." and were known in the hitherto documents as "Hormeni" (ibid).

Bartles (1983), the Catholic Father and seasoned anthropologist, discusses culturally and linguistically there is adequate evidence that the Biblical peoples such as Levite and Hittite must be Oromos. Megalommatitis (www.voicefinfinne.org), Egyptology professor, illuminates Oromo-Meroe-Egyptian linguistic *cognates* and cultural *semes*. De Salviac (1901) also listed lots of Oromo lexemes that extend back, in time, to antiquity and genetically extends in space as far from Africa to Gaelic and Red Indians of America. This is possible, for evolutionary/genetic linguists ^{dis} prove ~~that~~ the traditional, mythical and arbitrary comparative methods assumption that, for languages change so rapidly and in linear fashion (are born, then grow and finally die) no trace of it remains by simple process of evolution after 6,000 years (Ruhlen, 2007). Professor Merritt Ruhlen, one of the leading genetic/evolutionary linguists of our time, convincingly proves in his numerous studies that this ceiling is not only misrecognition of Darwinian evolutionary theory, but also is a myth invented by the 20th century Indo-Europeanists to protect the splendid isolation of their language family. Merritt Ruhlen, ~~one of the leading evolutionary/genetic linguists~~, successfully challenges:

... the central myth of twentieth-century historical linguistics [that] has been the belief that the comparative method is limited to a relatively short time depth—usually put at 5,000–10,000 years—beyond which all trace of genetic affinity has been erased by unrelenting waves of semantic and phonological change....What exactly are these guesses based on? And why do such “guesses” range from 3,000–10,000 years, and not, say 40,000–50,000 years?...The main reason, I believe, is the *presumed* age of the Indo-European family itself, which has traditionally been put very close to these stated limits of the validity of comparative linguistics (Ruhlen nd.: p. 243).¹

This unfounded myth is used by the Indo-European colonial linguists to intransigently claim ‘the splendid isolation’ of the modern Indo-European languages—that Indo-Europeans have no any relations with the Black World,

¹ Ruhlen, Merritt (nd.) Amerind MALIQ’A ‘Swallow, Throat’ and Its Origin in the Old World’ is a book chapter, Chapter 11, pp. 242-251. The author has no access to the full book. (Available at: www.merrittruhlen.com/files/MALIQA.pdf).

particularly Africans. Ruhlen unveils abundant global and regional cognates that go beyond 11, 000 BC, cohering proto languages and revealing ancestral traces of first nations of Americas, Austroasia and Africa.

On their part, Abyssinianist Indo-Semitists argue that South Arabian immigrants cruised over the Red Sea in the 4th century AD and built civilization (philosophy, epigraphy, etc) called “Judea”, “Sabaeen”, “Ethiopic”, “Abyssinia”, “Ge’ez” into East Africa, Meroe and Nubia (*Encyclopedia of African History* 2005; Sumner 1988; Sillasie 1972; Ullendorff 1960; Marcus 1994; Leslau 1991). Some are confident that the Cushites contributed “nothing” for the “Ethiopian Civilization” for they are “barbaric” and possessed no “significant material or intellectual culture” (Ullendorff *ibid.*: 73, 76; Beckingham & Huntingford 1954: 111-139) and hence were “vassals” of the Semite immigrants (Sayce 1909; 1913).

It appears that there is a deliberate obfuscation, by colonial linguists, of the possible genetic relationship between and among Cushitic (ancient or modern), Meroitic and (Old) Nubian. Griffith wrote “while Meroitic was the official language for writing, Nubian was the mother-tongue of Lower Nubia” (in Rowan 2006: 172). This implies that both were contemporaneous. Especially, after deciphering Meroitic signs, Griffith (1911) began to advocate the theory that Meroitic might be an older form of the Nubian language. Greenberg (1966), who denies the Africanness of Meroitic, argues Old Nubian is spoken in the Nile Valley and beyond, from Upper Egypt through to northern Sudan.

Scholars have already de-stabilized these traditional wisdoms about Axumite and Meroe. Diop (1987: 199) explicates that the ultimate aim of this Indo-Semite falsity, but at vain, is: “attributing these [African civilizations] to a non-African, non-Black people: Persians, Arabs, Phoenicians, or Israelites.” Also, Bekerie (1997), the post-modern critical historian on Ethio-Semitic, explicated the fear of this colonial linguistics/history group:

Western scholars' consistent intent to exclude, without any evidence, the [ancient] Ethiopic language as one of the possible languages of [the ancient documents], perhaps, suggests that the Ethiopic language is not part of the Indo-Semitic languages...[rather it] is an African language and thus it is not suitable within the hegemonic paradigm of the western scholarship (Bekerie 1997: 116).

The great scholar W.E.B. DuBois, the pioneer of Pan-africanism, africanology and African origin of world's civilization, wrote a lot about the Oromo-Cush but summarized by Dr. Ayele Bekerie, the only critical and liberal Ethiopian historian ever to make a departure from orthodox monastic and phantasmagoric Abyssinian historiography as follows:

According to W.E.B. DuBois (1947; Reprint, 1972), "the First (Egyptian) Dynasty appears to have moved up from Punt. The Third Dynasty, which led to the Fourth, shows a strongly Ethiopian face in Sa Nekht. The Twelfth Dynasty (1955 BCE-1750 BCE) we can trace to a [Oromo] origin; the Eighteenth Dynasty was Ethiopian paired by marriage; the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was from distant Meroe." DuBois also quotes Sir Harry Johnston as stating: "The Dynastic Egyptians were not far distant in physical type from the Oromo of today" (Bekerie 2004:116).

Bekerie strengthened W.E.B. DuBois's argumentations further when he observed Ancient Egyptian theological theme "Uakha" and the Oromo "Waaqa" linkage and added:

The Oromo-Ancient Egyptian connection could be deduced from a significant Oromo conceptual term found in these ancient Egyptian documents and artifacts. The term is "Auqas a name of the divine ferryman." The Oromos call their God Waqaa...It is also interesting to note that the term Sirius, the beautiful star that rises once a year towards the source of the Nile, corresponds both in meaning and pronunciation with the Oromo term for a dog, *Sarre*. The star warns the Egyptian farmer against the coming water and hence the metaphoric designation Sirius, because it is like a barking dog, which gives notice to danger and, therefore, called this star the dog, the barker (Bekerie 2004:116).

Clyde Winters informs us that Henry Rawlinson, one of the early Egyptologists (also British Army soldier), "used an African language Galla [Oromo], to decipher" not only Egyptian hieroglyphics, but also the so-called "Babylonian cuneiform

writing”.² George Rawlinson (1862: 25) who deciphered in Babylonian or Mesopotamian tombs scriptures such Oromo words as “Guda” or “Gada” (also “Gudea” Diop, 1975: 60) decisively concluded:

Its [Babylonean language’s] vocabulary has been pronounced to be “decidedly Cushite or Ethiopian;” and the modern languages to which it approaches the nearest are thought to be the Mahra of Southern Arabia and the Galla of Abyssinia. Thus comparative philology appears to confirm the old traditions. An Eastern Ethiopia instead of being the invention of bewildered ignorance is rather a reality...

Rawlinson (1897: 314-315) adds about Ancient Egyptian “Under the Ethiopians” or, appropriately, the Cush:

Among the various tribes there was a certain community of race, a resemblance of physical type, and a similarity of language. Their neighbours, the Egyptians, included them all under a single ethnic name, speaking of them as Kashi or Kushi—a term manifestly identical with the Cush or Cushi of the Hebrews.... Their best representatives in modern times are the purebred Abyssinian tribes, the Gallas, Wolai’tzas, and the like, who are probably their descendants.

Willis Budge, the notorious Semitist encyclopedic writer and transl(ite)rator of Ancient Egyptian, acknowledged in his *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*:

The ancient Egyptians were Africans, and they spoke an African language, and the modern peoples of the Eastern Sudan are Africans, and they speak African languages, and there is in consequence much in modern native Sudani literature which will help the student of ancient Egyptian in his work. From the books of Tutschek³, Krapf⁴, Mitterutzner⁵ and from the recently published works of Captain Owen⁶ and Westermann⁷ a student with the necessary leisure can collect a large number of facts of importance for the comparative study of Nilotic languages both ancient and modern (Budge 1920:IXIX-IXX).

²Winters, C. Genesis and the Children of Kush (Available at: http://www.egyptsearch.com/forums/ultimatebb.cgi?ubb=get_topic;f=8;t=007102).

³ *Grammar of the Galla-Language*. Munich, 1845 ; and his *Lexicon*. Munich, 1841.

⁴ *Vocabulary of the Galla -Language*. London, 1842.

⁵ *Die Dinka-Sprache in Central Afrika* (with Worterbuch). Brixen, 1866.

⁶ *Bari Grammar and Vocabulary*. London, 1908.

⁷ *The Shilluk People : their Language and Folklore*. Berlin, 1912 ; *Die Sudansprachen*. Hamburg, 1911; *The Nuer Language*. Berlin, 1912.

In his critical work, Mr. John Jackson (1939) reached the following conclusions about Ancient Oromo-Cush:

1. The system of writing which they brought with them has the closest affinity with that of Egyptian—in many cases indeed, there is an absolute identity between the two alphabets.
2. In the Biblical genealogies, Cush (Ethiopia) and Mizraim (Egyptian) are brothers, while from the former sprang Nimrod (Babylonia.)
3. In regard to the language of the primitive Babylonians, the vocabulary is undoubtedly Cushite or Ethiopian, belonging to that stock of tongues which in the sequel were everywhere more or less mixed up with the Semitic languages, but of which we have probably the purest modern specimens in the Mahra of Southern Arabia and the Galla [Oromo] of Abyssinia.

Hence, it is the assumption of this paper that, given the antiquity, early civilization roles and areal position of the Cushites, there is no need to look for data outside Cushitic.

2.2. RHETORICAL PRINCIPLES OF MEROITIC AND ANCIENT EGYPTIAN

The Ancient Black Africans that some 19th century European monks and researchers referred to as ‘Ancient Egyptians’, whom others refer to as Ancient Cushites /Ethiopians or Meroe, are the “earliest to write about language and the brain... the first to write about anything at all” (Altmann, 2006: 802). For it is so important in this discussion, let’s also emphasize that geometry, was first “cultivated in Egypt, whence the Greeks derived it ; but it was cultivated as little more than a set of approximate rules for use in land measuring” (Rogers, 1901:9).

Initially, Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic was zoomorphic mode of representation as the sign-language of ‘totemism’ and ‘mythology’. Eurocentric Egyptologists have to but call it “worship” of stones, bulls, cows, trees, serpents, birds, sun “goddesses”, etc, etc. Thanks to, open-minded scholars (e.g., Massey, 1907; James, 1954; Diop, 2000), they latter accepted that for the Black Africans, it was as much zoophilism (devotion to and respect for animals) and zoomorphism (use of animals in arts), as it was social epistemological, semiotical or grammatological project. In other words, those engineers of the world’s first and

infant civilization were, in actuality, experimenting knowledge abstraction, storage and communication through the techniques of zoomorphologization (i.e., idea-naming or calquing after (name of) animals), zoosemotactic (i.e., symbolization, figuritivation or signification of literary or non-literary meanings) and structuration of social institutional concepts by symbols or signs of real world objects and animals.

Eurocentric Egyptologists tell us only few strategies that the Egyptian/Meroitic people used in their systems. These are the principles of *rebus* (i.e., portraying a real world entity whose name is *only* phonologically similar to a concept/word in focus), *semagram* (i.e., portraying a picture or symbol whose meaning *only* is associated with a word/concept in their language), or *logogram/ideogram* (i.e., portraying a picture or sign whose meaning is associated metonymically or metaphorically with a word/concept in their language). They rarely or never consider other (possible) strategies, possibly due to their Eurocentric biases or due to genuine impacts of external culture that precludes the inside-out insights.

Two key strategies can be suggested based upon African peoples' traditions. One is portrayal of symbols/signs (letters, pictures, paintings, engravings or designed cultural objects, for instance, amulets, or naturalistic objects, for instance, landscapes) on the basis of metonymic-semantic-phonologic harmonization yet fundamentally generated by percepts of natural laws or 'causal powers' (e.g., the virile bull or its picture or engraving as not only representation but also with the homological alternation of the same single word). This is slightly similar to designing of simulacra of their politico-theological concepts/words from objects in the real world based on imagistic similarity between the two (e.g., sacred material cultures such phallic objects, staff or stick, etc.), were among their diagrammatological strategies.

The second key strategy is sequencing a group of pictures/signs, grouping them or superimposing or subsuming them under another according to their linguistic-

semantic *semotactic*, the phonological-lexical-syntactic-semantic sequences required to communicate a series of *sememe*, the small(est) logico-semantic concept, or *hypersemotactic*, similar sequence that stands for a complex social-ontological *logico-semantic epistemes* simultaneously subsuming *semotactic structures*. To use the modern and succinct systemic functional linguistic terms, the sequence could be sequenced in “tactic relations”, i.e., *parataxis* “units combined being of equal status” or *hypotaxis* “units combined being of unequal status” (Matthiessen, Teruya & Lam 2010: 132).

2.3. OROMO RHETORICAL PRINCIPLES: REFLEX OF THE SPIRITS OF “DEAD” FOREBEARS?

The Oromo and their Cushite brothers occupied all the vast geographic lands of North East Africa and Horn of Africa and used to peacefully live with the rest of their Black African friends until the first two decades of the 19th century. This well registered by the first *real* European travelers of 1830s (forget the so-called 16th-18th centuries travelers for that was anachronistic fabrications of the latter). The Oromo like their Cushite friends consistently speak age-old reminiscence ~~of~~ through-and-through constriction and contraction of their population and land from the “massive” and “beyond” to the “infinitesimal” and “proximate”. The Oromo were ultimately subjugated by Abyssinians, armed by European ammunition and Bible, who converted their worldview to Orthodox Christianity only during the same time, particularly since 1800 (although Abyssinian historians claim 4th century AD, there is no evidence whatsoever; they only claim based on “rock-hewn churches” with paintings or engravings of cross signs, but who said that ^{is} Christian?). Oromo scholars estimate the size of their population to 40 million. They reject Abyssinian/Ethiopian regimes’ census not only because the Oromo also settle, since time immemorial, across ‘national’ borders (of Ethio-Somali, Ethio-Kenya, Ethio-Sudan, Ethio-Djibouti as well as Ethio-Eretria), but also because these regimes have left no stone unturned to systematically dismantle the identity, demography, settlement pattern or land, history, institutions and long-standing plausibility structure of the Oromo. On their national constitutions, policy documents, school and higher institution curricula, the God-Select Semitico-Abyssinian regimes officially de-Ethiopianized and de-Africanized the Oromo and other Cushites. Unlike their 20th century friends, the 21st century Semitico-Ethiopian regimes feel proud of “liberating” Oromo from subjugation

only by playing on 'soft' words, for instance, softening from "Galla migration" to "Oromo expansion".

To come back to our main focus, it is interesting to know that the Oromo rhetorical organization has preserved its feature of "ancient texts" (Sumner 1996:19). That is, it ~~that~~ exploits "intimate link...between form, content and concrete situation in life" (Sumner 1996: 17-18) or "formulaic texts" (Triulzi & Bitima 2005: 132-136). The Oromo theologico-politico-democratic Gada Laws were "issued in verse" (Cotter, 1990: 70) and in "the *long string of rhyme*, which consists of repeating the same verse at the end of each couplet" or a "series of short sententious phrases" that are "disposed to help memory" (de Salviac, 2005 [1901]: 285). It is not only the languages/expressions but also the Oromo rituals⁸ and "meetings of the assembly... [the] dress, posture, and seating arrangements of the celebrants" of the *Lallaba/Lablaba* 'public harangue or deliverance of Gada Laws' are all "rigidly patterned" (Legesse, 1973: 215). For this reason, scholars warn that "interpretations of Oromo terms, idiomatic expressions, and proverbs related to *gada* have meanings other than their surface meaning" (Hassen, 1994: 9). In their 'Introduction' to the historical-anthropological book they edited, Baxter, Hultin and Triulzi emphasize that "the philosophical concepts that underlie the *gadaa* system...utilize a symbolic code much of which is common to all Oromo" (Baxter, et. al., 1996: 21).

Oromo wiseman speaks and sings in rhythmic verses that interweave various genre varieties, styled by "the usual" and "artful sound parallelism...forming a kind of parallelism of sounds or images" (Cerulli, 1922: 21, 87, 67, 69, 96) or, as another scholar expresses it, forming "parallelism of sounds" and "image" in "vocalic harmony" (Bartels, 1975: 898). It is the reflection of that old tradition that even the contemporary time elderly Oromo skilled in Oromo wisdom speaks "in

⁸ Lambert Bartels' definition of 'ritual' (based on the renowned anthropologist Victor Turner) is pursued in this paper: "Behaviour which forms part of a signaling system and which serves to 'communicate information', not because of any mechanical link between means and ends, but because of the existence of a culturally defined code" (Bartels, 1977:503).

ritual language, as it was used in old times at the proclamation of the law” (Bartels, 1983: 309). Professor Claude Sumner, who has produced three volume analysis of Oromo wisdom literature argues that like any “ancient texts”, in Oromo wisdom literature, “a same unit of formal characters, namely of expressions, of syntactic forms, of vocabulary, of metaphors...recur over and over again, and finally a vital situation...that is a same original function in the life of [the people]” (Sumner, 1996:19). This is a feature “surely has developed within the [Oromo] language” and “is also only imaginable in a sonorous language such as Oromo” which “as a prerequisite, [has] a formally highly developed poetical technique” (Littmann, 1925: 25 cited in Bartels, 1975: 899). Claude Sumner formulates a “double analogy” tactic as prototypical feature of Oromo wisdom literature, i.e., “vertical” and “horizontal” parallelism style (Sumner, 1996: 25), known for the most part to linguists as, respectively, ‘paradigmatic’ (‘content’ or ‘material’) and ‘syntagmatic’ (‘form’ or ‘substance’) relations or contextual-diachronic and textual-synchronic relations.

2.3. HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper hypothesizes that *Oromo is Meroe is Egyptian is Cushitic*. Hence, it intends to collect and comparatively and critically analyze, Meroitic, Old Nubian, some Ancient Egyptian and Oromo phonological, lexico-grammatical, symbological items and cultural-historical sememes. The following set of specific questions is formulated to guide the inquiry:

1. Is Meroitic a distinct language or is it simply (a dialect/family of ancient) Cushitic?
2. What can the hitherto deciphered Meroitic lexical and grammatical items offer us about relations among Meroe, (Old) Nubian and Oromo?
3. What explanatory role would the Afan Oromo (‘Oromo Language’) play between ‘the extinct’ Meroe, on the one hand, and the (Old) Nubian, on the other?

3. METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Meroitic and Old Nubian lexical, grammatical and epigraphic data are collected from secondary sources (Winters 1984; Browne 1996, 2002; Bersina 1984; Rilly 2004; Rowan 2006; Aubin 2003), each of who have either directly deciphered from Meroitic inscriptions or obtained from classical Meroitic researchers (e.g., Griffith 1911). Similarly, Old Nubian data are obtained from Rowan (2006), who obtained the Old Nubian lexemes from Browne (1996, 2002). Related data from egyptologists (e.g., Wilkinson 1854; Petrie, 1904, 1909, 1939; Rawlinson 1880) are also important, for there is strong relationship between Meroitic and Egyptian civilizations. The last Ancient Egyptian document of Horapollo (translated by Cory 1840) is also key Egyptian resource. Horapollo, “a native of *Phænebyth*”, was an Egyptian who, in general, is believed to “offer ‘decipherment’ of the [Egyptian] hieroglyphs fully echoing the late antique symbolic speculations” (Loprieno 1995: 26). Martin Bernal, one of the few critical Semitist scholars (e.g., Bernal 1987, 1992, 2006) is also exploited as good comparative data resource.

Oromo corpora are obtained both from field and archives. Native-speaker data (including the author) were collected, in addition to the classical Oromo dictionaries by Krapf (1842), Tutschek (1844) and Foot (1913) and the contemporary by Stegman (2011) as key resources. For broader socio-historical, literary, cultural, philosophical and mythological tradition and lexemes/sememes of Oromo, the major resources, *inter alia*, are De Salviac (1901[2005]), Cerulli (1922), Legesse (1973, 2000), Bartels (1983), Gidada (1984), Baxter, et al (1996).

A comparative phylogenetic and evolutionary linguistic approach is adopted so that lexical-semantic comparison with and against other African ancient languages or reconstructions (e.g., Proto-Cushitic, Proto-Nubian, (Proto-) Afro-Asiatic, (Proto-)Indo-European). It is also noted that the ‘shaky’ classical

“languages”—rather, better to say ‘re-constructed texts’ from real texts by systematically distorting the latter/real (e.g. Classical Ge’ez, Classical Greek, Classical Latin)—might cross language phyla and timespace. Some archaeological linguistic/semiotic data are also collected from archives, though only few are presented for space constraints.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly and briefly phonological systems of Meroitic, Old Nubian and Oromo are analyzed. The interest is not comparative phonetic analysis but to only see the key patterns from evolutionary phonology perspective. Next comparative analysis of some grammatical particles of the three languages is carried out. Next analysis of Meroitic and Oromo lexical items—form and meaning—is analyzed. Following that, a comparative analysis of Old Nubian and Oromo lexical items is presented before some archaeological semiotic/linguistic analysis. This section is a bit longer. Finally, conclusions and implications of the findings are presented.

5.1. PHONOLOGY: CONSIDERATIONS AND ISSUES

In this paper, the International Phonetic Association (IPA, Crystal 2008) style⁹ as in is followed (Table 1). Most notably, the IPA symbols for the palatoalveolar *f* and *tʃ* have been replaced by the more familiar *š* and *č*, respectively. Similarly, *y* is used for the palatal glide rather than *j*. The Meroitic and Old Nubian consonantal phoneme inventories (Table 1) are obtained Rowan (2006) and Aubin (2003). The Old Nubian phonemes are known only in ‘Greek’ letter and their Latin transliterations are given by the author (for *η* and *η* the ‘Greek’ signs are skipped for the rarity of the signs).

The Oromo consonantal phonemes inventory is adopted from Tutschek (1844, 1845) and Andrzejews (1957). Pervasive phonological features in Oromo are

⁹ Symbols: *x ~y*: sound *x* alternates or contrasts in one dialect with *y* ; *X >Y*: lexeme *X* alternates or changes to *Y* by sound and/or analogical change.

ejectives (*p'*, *č'*, *t'*, *d'*, *c'*, *k'*, *q'*) affricates (*č*, *š*, *ɟʒ*, *ɟʒ*, *ğ*) and fricatives (*s*, *ʃ*, *ç*, *ʒ*, *z*, *ğ*, *h*, *χ*).

Table1: Meroitic, Old Nubian and Oromo consonantal phonemes inventories

¹⁰ Class	Meroitic	Old Nubian	Oromo
Bilabials	<i>b, p</i>	<i>p/π, f/φ</i>	<i>b, p', f</i>
Nasals	<i>m, n, ñ</i>	<i>m/μ, n/ν, ŋ, η</i>	<i>m, n, ɲ, ŋ, ñ</i>
Liquids	<i>l, r</i>	<i>r/ρ, l/λ</i>	<i>r, l</i>
Sibilants, Fricatives	<i>s</i>	<i>s/c, š/ɲ</i>	<i>s, ʃ, z, š, ç</i>
Alveolar, Retroflex	<i>t, d</i>	<i>t/τ, d/δ¹¹</i>	<i>t, t', ʈ; d, ɖ, ɖ', d'</i>
Affricates	-	<i>ɟʒ/σ</i>	<i>č', č, ɟʒ; ɟʒ, ğ, ɖy</i>
Palatal, Vela, Uvular	<i>k, q</i>	<i>k/κ, ɣ/g</i>	<i>c, c', k', k, g, ɟ, q', q</i>
Glottalic	<i>h, ʕ</i>	<i>h/ħ; ¹²α</i>	<i>χ, h, ʕ, ħ, ʔ, ʕ'</i>
Semi-Vowels	<i>w, y</i>	<i>w/oγ, y/ι or ει</i>	<i>w, y</i>

One of the voiced affricates transcribed by Tutschek as *ɖy* (lamino-alveolar, retroflex, palatal-glide) cannot be substituted by IPA's double articulation sign *ɟʒ*. It is "best produced by pronouncing the *ɖ* and *y* quickly according to their usual pronunciation" (Tutschek 1845: 5). So, it is sometimes retained. Also, the Oromo nasal phonemes are, in general, "homorganic", i.e., "they have the same place of articulation as the immediately following consonant" (Andrzejews 1957: 357); thus, they could be realized as palatal, lateral, nasal, dental, alveolar, laminal (see also Tutschek 1844, 1846). For instance, *ñ* "a sound which occupies tongue, nose and palate at once" (Tutschek, 1844: XXVII) is realized as *m* before *b* and *p'*¹³, as *ɲ* before *f*, as laminal -n before *t*, *d*, *t'*, and *s*, as *n* (alveolar) before *d'*, *č*, and *č'*, as *ɲ* before *ɟʒ*, and as *ŋ* before *k*, *g*, and *k'* (Andrzejews 1957: 357).

¹⁰ The word 'class' is used to mean that it is categorization based on emergent, during analysis, pattern/cognates rather than solely by the formal place and/or manner of articulation.

¹¹ The phonemes *B*, *z*, *θ* exist in Old Nubian texts but "they are omitted as they are only found in loans" (Rowan 2006: 196)

¹² Old Nubian *α* is closer to the glide */y/* or glottalic */ʔ/* or geminated */a/* (Rowan 2006; Aubin 2005)

¹³ Abyssinian colonial linguists tell us that the bilabial ejective */p'/* phoneme, which never existed in Ethiosemitic, was borrowed from the 'dead' Classical Greek into the 'dead' Ge'ez or they deny its existence in any Ethiopian contemporary languages. However, it is abundant in Oromo-Cush except rarely at the initial of words. Example Oromo are: *lap'ee* 'chest, heart', *happ'e* 'resin', *happ'ii* 'thin', *sip'ee* 'darkness', *sip'a* 'to lap up, pull, gravitate, magnetize', *č'uup'a* 'to immerse, dip'; *saap'up'aa* 'web, spider web, cobweb'; *sup'ee* 'semi-solid, smooth, clay', *sup'a* 'to knead, stitch; the act of stitching, kneading', *buup'aa* 'egg', etc.

In Oromo the rhotic liquids/trills *r*, *l*, *n* alternate or assimilate one another and are, essentially, retroflex. When geminated or followed by long vowels or glottal stop ʔ, they become pharyngealized/velarized fricative continuants. Moreover the retroflex and implosive ejectives *q'* and *d'* alternate with or assimilates each of the latter trills as well as, at word final, the glottalic sounds. We shall also find that *d'* and *q'* also alternate with the alveo-palatal ejective /t'/ and the retroflex /ɬ/ (Tutschek 1845; Griefenow-Mewis 2001). Also, the Oromo /f/, /b/, /h/, /g/, /k/ become ingressive before back vowels.

Likewise, many scholars have found out that Old Nubian, Meroitic (Browne 1989; Hintze 1986, both in Aubin *ibid*; Rilly 2004) and Egyptian liquids (Bernal 2006) *l*, *r*, *n*, <*d*> alternate or assimilate one another. It is possibly due to this that the Egyptian sign /3/, represented by vulture/hawk pictogram, is translated differently as *d*, *ḏ*, *r*, *l* or closer sounds (Bernal 1987, 2006). Similarly, classical Greek scholars admit that the same pattern is observed in Greek texts (Woodard, 2008b; Bakker 2010; Clackson & Horrocks 2007). Tovar (2010: 262) stresses “The confusion of liquids *q/λ* [r/l] is common in many [ancient] languages. However, we find it more profusely in documents from Fayum” (insertions added). As in Oromo (Tutschek 1844, 1845; Griefenow-Mewis 2001) the Nubian and Meroitic (Rowan 2006; Aubin 2003) and Egyptian (Bernal 2006) labials /w/, /b/, /m/, /f/, /p/ (also /p'/ in Oromo) all alternate.

In this paper, vowels are de-emphasized, for, as generally agreed, Meroitic as well as Ancient Egyptian writing systems ‘do not’ record them. Vocalic sounds were not signified because, as many scholars believe (Aubin 2004; Rowan), in both the Egyptian and Meroitic writing, a single sign stood for a free morpheme/a word of CV (Consonant-Vowel) or *Ṽ* type. In Oromo, too, almost every CV and *Ṽ* (usually elongated VV) series is free morphemes in Oromo (see Table 2; to test each verb, make the subject *An* ‘I’ or *Na* ‘I (dative) except the Commands). They must end in “short”, “almost quite mute”, “only a breath and aiming at”

sound (Tutschek 1844: xxiii-xxiv). Andrzejewski (1957: 364) describes these word-ultimate vocalic sounds as “‘vowel-coloured breaths’, ‘voiceless vowels’, ‘unvoiced vowels’, ‘semi-mute vowels’, or ‘whispered vowels’ representing them by the “superior” letters: ⁱ, ^e, ^a, ^o and ^u. Tutschek (1844: xxiv) also adds to this list ^ʕ: “the same consonant as Semitic Ayin” and the sign ~ which is “a nasal sound”. In current Oromo, these are signified by ^ʔ*dʔa* / ^ʔ*udʔa*,¹⁴ ‘name for the apostrophe sign’ (or raised glottal stop /^ʔ/), literally ‘mute, choke, strangle’, reminding us the aforementioned Platonic category of ‘mutes’.

Table 2: Oromo monosyllabic verbs

Gloss	Meaning
<i>ā, aʔa</i>	“to charge, gore, impale (for bull, with horn)”
<i>ē, ēé!</i>	“to okay; yes!”
<i>óā, oʔa</i>	“to be hot; to growl, cry (pain)”
<i>bā</i>	“to get up, get out, go out, emerge, rise, approach”
<i>čʔā, tēāʔ</i>	“to cross, cross over, traverse, transform”
<i>dā</i>	“to give birth (female); bring forth, accoucher”
<i>dʔā</i>	“to strike, beat, smite; make, pursue, imitate; sew, weave; mould; clap hands”
<i>dʒā, dʒaʔ</i>	“to smell, to be no more useful”
<i>fā, fāā</i>	“to be healthy, shiny”
<i>gā</i>	“to flux, reach, arrive; get sufficient/big enough; satisfy, suffice”
<i>ǵā, ǵāʔ</i>	“to say, convey; think, do, stay for while”
<i>hā, haʔ</i>	“to throw”
<i>kā</i>	“to put, store, set aside, quit”
<i>kʔā, qaʔ</i>	“to have opening, hole; become dim, black; roast (coffee)”
<i>ḵā</i>	“to rise, arise, set out, begin; appear, arise, get up”
<i>lā!, lāā</i>	“Behold! Look! See!”, “to creep (cats)”
<i>rā</i>	“copulate, bore, drill; set in (e)motion, set free; to oscillate, churn, ray”
<i>mā!; mama</i>	“no!, why!; to say no, deny, doubt”
<i>nā</i>	“be afraid, be frightened, fear”
<i>sā, sāa, sāʔ</i>	“to see, conceive, feel, think so; to expect, predict, suspect”
<i>šā</i>	“to swarm, mass, stream, move snake-like”
<i>tā, tā</i>	“to sit, stay, remain; abide, dwell, inhabit”
<i>tā, tā</i>	“to be, become, become, be possible, happen; to fit, last”
<i>yā, yaʔ</i>	“to flow, flux, extend, ooze; to ditch, trench”
<i>wāā, waya</i>	“be better”

Likewise, in Egyptian, special sign(s) known as ‘determinative hieroglyphs’ are attached to a word to determine its “meaning as opposed to its sound” (Bernal 2006: 700) or “classify a word according to its semantic sphere” (Loprieno 1995:

¹⁴ ^ʔ*údʔa* comes from the onomatopoeic verb ^ʔ*údʔa* (also *dʔúdʔa*) ‘to gulp down, to mute, choke’ and its substantive *dʔúdʔó* (also ^ʔ*údʔó*, *ḵúdʔó*) ‘mute, struggle; goiter; choke’.

13). According to Erman (1894: 16- 19) these involve hieroglyphs or pictograms depicting: a sitting wo/man deciphered as phonetic /t/ (e.g.,  transcribed *mjw*t and translated as “mother” by Egyptologists, but most probably Oromo *qoro-ta*, literally, {FALCON-SIT}¹⁵, appropriately the Gada System Classe *Qero-ta* , literally “young woman-PL.ART”, the early fighter/warrior class¹⁶ or, *Room-itša* literally {VULTURE-SPECIFIED.ACC}, symbol of “the baron” class), a grammarian’s equipment, a settlement/country, bird(s), walking legs  and others.¹⁷ Diop (1989: 171) argues “in Egyptian the determinative has often a vocal value and is pronounced in the same way as the specific name.” It is interesting to know that, all the Oromo monosyllabic root-verbs in Table 2 serve as bound morphemes or suffixes as we have seen, here, *tā* and *-ta*, as an example. This cuts parallel with the larger Oromo speech-act style of repetition, by the chorus, of the last word of the blesser, the leader of the chorus, in order to amplify and endorse of the expressed wishes during pray to *Waaqa*. Indeed, language is *circular* as is reality, too.

At last, it is important to mention that in Oromo vowel shortening, elongation (indicated by diacritics or doubling of the letter) and harmonization are pervasive and make significant grammatical and semantic differences. So is gemination (indicated by doubling of the geminated consonant), too.

5.2 MEROITIC, OLD NUBIAN AND OROMO GRAMMATICAL PARTICLES

To begin with, it is good to primarily note that Cushitic family, hence Oromo, Nubian (‘Old’ as well) and Meroitic are all, formally, of Subject Object Verb (SOV)

¹⁵ Note the allomorphic categories: *č’uʔo* “eagle, horsekite”, *qoro* “hawk, crow (white head)”, , *rágã/ʔaragesa* “raven, crow”; the latter two are symbols or representations of noble men (*qoro*) and prophesiers (*rágo*).

¹⁶Key Abbreviations: acc./ACC=accusative; ART/art.=article; aux./AUX=auxiliary; COP/cop.=copulative; caus./CAUS=causative; lit.,=literal(ly); perf./PERF=perfective; def./DEF=definitive; loc./LOC.=locative; nom./NOM=nominative; PL/pl.=plural; redup.=reduplication; refl./REFL=reflexive;

¹⁷ See also Erman, *Egyptian Grammar* pp. 16- 19; Here, let’s only add that, we can consider the Oromo *ba* ‘to go out, walk out’ or *fa-n^a* ‘foot-INVARIABLE’ and the suffixes: *-fa(n^a)* or *-ba(n^a)* similar to English *-th* as in 4th, *-ward(s)* as in “upward(s)”, or appended to reflexive verbs to mark REFLEXIVE e.g., *d’uku-ba* ‘pain-REF’ “am seek”, *hāsa-(o)fn^a* ‘chat-REF’ “(I/we) negotiate for self”.

and postpositive syntactic structure (Rowan 2006). Some Meroitic and Old Nubian grammatical particles (Table 3) are obtained from Winters (1994), Rilly (2004), Rowan (2006) and Aubin (2003). None of these researchers is categorical especially about the Meroitic particles (indicated by the question marks). Rilly deciphered from original Meroitic scripts, while Aubin and Rowan rely on secondary data from classical (early 20th century) Meroitic researchers as well as of the modern ones. Winters, for instance, warns it is yet to be “tested by other Meroitic experts”, while it cannot be rejected for “Sir Henry Rawlinson deciphered the Meroitic scriptures using Agau and [Oromo], both Cushitic languages” (1984: 21). The Oromo data are obtained from Griefenow-Mewis (2001), Tutschek (1844; 1845) and some are own field data (e.g., -la/-ra ‘nominalizer of monosyllabic/CV verbs’).

For the most part, as displayed in the table (Table 3) the Meroitic particles are only deciphered but not explained. Those explained, albeit few, precisely correspond with both Oromo and Old Nubian counterparts. Among the above grammatical particles, what is interesting is the Old Nubian, -ḏiλ/-(α)piλ ‘future’ plus personal endings for the subjunctive (or just personal endings) and a predicative α /a, ʔ/ for the indicative (Aubin 2003). According to Aubin, in the written forms of Old Nubian that survive, all these suffixes have undergone assimilation, in every case dropping the λ/l/ of the verbid or transmuting it to p /r/. In Oromo, future notion is signified by post-positing or attaching to the verb the form (-)ḏjir^a, while the final vowel can be –a “3rd person singular masculine or inanimate” (plus - ʔi for feminine) or -ʔa “1st person plural neuter gender” (plus –n for 3rd plural).

Table 3: Meroitic-Old-Nubian-Oromo grammatical particles

OLD NUBIAN	MEROITIC	OROMO
-n ‘third singular preterite I’		-mi 1 st person singular perfect -ne 1 st person plural preterite
-v/-av ‘multiplicative suffix’	ni ??	-an ‘multiplicative suffix’

	-l/-r, -yi, -ñyi 'nominalizing'	-ña 'nominalizer' -la/-ra 'nominalizer of monosyllabic (CV or V) verbs'
-o '3 rd , sing. preterite'	-o ??	-o 'aorist, multiplex'; -ičo '3 rd , sing. vocative-aorist'
	-li, -sli 'potential first person endings'	-le '1 st per., benefactive additive'
-il/-el 'present'	-li, -lw, -sl, ?? -sli, -slw ??	-era 'present perfect'; -re 'affirmative- interrogative mood'
-ol 'preterite I' -il 'preterite II'		-e, -?e, -ere, -ele, -er 'preterite' -ē q'ur 'double past'
-diλ/-(α)piλ 'future'	-teli, -te (with unwritten n), -telw ??	-q'ad'a, -ṭad'a
δε, δερ 'and'	ter??	-qi/-qa, -ṭi/-ṭa 'and (serial, sequential)'
-cw 'imperative particle'	-to 'optative or imperative sense'	-(a)d'u, -?i 'impertave; optative' -qō/-ṭō, (-q'a)wo/(-ṭi)wo 'aorist'
	a-, α 'vocative'	yā/-yē- 'vocative'
-d /d/, q/, -ḡ/ḡ/ 'direct object marker'	-dh, -ḡ 'direct object marker'	-(a)d'a 'verb to BE, direct object marker, auto-/benefactive, reflective'
-le 'partitive genitive'	-le 'plural'	-lé 'partitive plural; benefactive- genitive plural "too"

Also, the outstanding parallelism observed among (see last but one row in Table 3) the Meroitic -dh, -ḡ, the Old Nubian -ḡ, -ḡ and the Oromo -(a)d'a (or -ad'e for preterite) is also shown by Egyptian in ḡ or -ḡt which marks stative or old perfective (Bernal 2006: 261). It is generally agreed, also, that the so-called Proto-Indo-European -t- is an agential suffix. We also know that in the ancient Greek texts, -(έ)στ- is the "(verb to) be". Bernal (2006) sees Egyptian (r)ditj as causal prefix similar to the Afroasiatic causal particle /s/ which sometimes comes at the initial. Then he goes on to define the Egyptian verb rdi "to give" (cf. Oromo ḡad'a "to give, hand out" from ră "to be, set in motion" or loa "to crawl, stretch out", hence arḡḡa "to donate, to lend hand, mercy" erâḡa "to hasten"). He adds that at a very early stage, the initial particle, r-, was dropped, giving rise to di or dit and in all the normal form was ti as well as taa and te/ti. All these point to Oromo causal particle -s or -ss /s, z, ṣ/ (mainly suffixed), the COP. -(a)d'a (also redup. autobenefactive -d'ad'a), whose perfective form is -ra/-le and the modal form is -ṭā (nom.) or -ṭi (acc.).

5.3. ANALYSIS OF MEROITIC LEXICAL ITEMS

The following (Table 4) Meroitic and Proto-Nubian (reconstructed) lexical data are obtained from Claude Rilly (Rilly 2004), one of the leading modern Meroitic researchers. Primarily, let us remember that the Egyptologist and Assyriologist, Megalommatitis (www.afroarticles.com), has deciphered the following Oromo words from Meroitic inscriptions: naga “peace, health”; baša “pay price, get something out, illumine; mount”; kiya “mine, my greatly beloved, favorite; name of Pharaoh Ankhenaton; personal name”; naqa “take the cattle to river; ferment, make beer, etc.” In addition, let’s note the dissipative rhotic process or interchange among the rhotic liquids, especially /r/ and /l/, a feature of (proto-) Afroasiatic as much common in Egyptian as is also in Oromo.

Table 4: Meroitic and Proto-Nubian lexical and corresponding Oromo

Meroitic	Oromo	Proto-Nubian
are [e r]	arar- “to reconcile, take; ila(la) “see!”	*aar- “take”
-dm-[d, am] “take, receive”	muṭ’a “snatch, suck off”	*dumm- “pick up, take”
hre [xar] “meal”	k’urk’ura, q’ora “cut off; gnaw off”; k’oroa “to gnaw”; ħira “share, spend”, ħirba “to give alms” ¹⁸ ; irba-ṭa “meal-COP non-finite”	goor “gnaw”
kdi [kadi],[Kandi] “woman”	qena “queen, mistress”(pl. qenoda) k’ero “young unmarried wo/man”	*kari “female”
ked-[ked,],[ked,] “slaughter”	k’ala “slaughter”; k’ara, qara “knife; sharp”	*nod- “slaughter”
wle [wal] “dog”	wonco “fox”; ʒaṭé “dog”, ʒaṭé(n)q’iq’a “dog-NEG=jackal, wolf”	wel “dog”
yer[era]or[ira] “milk”	aetu “milk/curd-COP infinitive”; arera “yogurt”; arma/ħarma “breast”	er-ti “breasts”
Apede-[e bed, e] Apede-mak (mk	abba “Father”; Waak’a “God”; Ad’aaba “lit., Mother-Father, ancient	*Ebed- “God”

¹⁸ Gardiner (1927/1973) translates Egyptian *iri* by “spend”.

"god")	lineage (ritual)"	
hlbi "bull"	gorba "three years old ox or heifer"; dʒabi	
dime "cow"	"calf", dʒabo 'bullock'	
ar "boy"	ila-ma "son-Middle Voice"; dʒira "male"	
arohe- "protect"	oria "growl"; arria "chase away"; arroyi	
	"succor (call)", ruḫa "strike off"	

Rilly did not define the Meroitic item *are* [e r]. The Proto-Nubian equivalent suggested, *aar- 'take', is hypothetical or reconstruction. If we take as accurate, then the Oromo arara (r~l) "to reconcile, take, compromise" and the deictic ila (ilame "Middle Voice") "behold!, lo!, look!" or ilala "see, consider" are not only lively but also similar to that of Old Nubian *app-/arr-/* 'to take' (Rowan 2006, p. 198) and the Surmi (which Rilly and others consider as Nilo-Saharan) *arra* "see" (Turton, Yigezu & Olibuip 2008: 25). The Egyptian *rh* "take note; list" (Bernal 2006: 414) and Oromo ráḡa, ráḫa "to prophesy; to relate tales, stories, fable" are possibly more related. The relationship among the Egyptian verb *rdi* "to give" and Oromo *lad'a* "to give, hand out" (-d'a "complementative or direct object marker") or *aḏḏa* "to donate, to lend hand, mercy" must suggest that the Meroitic *are* [e r] might well be the same.

The Meroitic *ked*-[ked,], [ked,] is defined as "slaughter" and the corresponding Proto-Nubian is goor "gnaw". In Oromo we can consider *k'ala* (l~r) "slaughter for sacrificial purpose" (according to Gadaa-Qaalluu principle), *k'ara* "knife; sharp" and *k'ora/q'ora* is "to gnaw". Since Meroitic *kdi* [kadi] or [Kandi] "woman", Proto-Nubian *kari "female" and Oromo *qena* "queen, mistress" (*qédī /gétī* nom-acc., *qenoda*, pl.), *qero* (*qeroda*, plural) "young unmarried wo/man", perfectly cognate. Even the Oromo lexis are, no doubt, etymon of the English word "queen", Greek κόρος, κοῦρος "lad, young man or woman", and Egyptian *šri* "son, lad, girl" (see Bernal 2006: 99, for relations between the Egyptian and the Greek lexis). Abyssinian-Semitic scholars and Egyptologists tell us different stories about queen *Candacè* or Κανθάκη but never explained.

Likewise, the Meroitic *Apede-[e bed,e]*, *Apede-mak* or *mk* “god” and Oromo *aba*, “father, lord”, *Waak’a* “God, heaven, sky” (m~w) or *Aboodjii/Abbootjii* “Apotheoses” must be the same. However, more interestingly, as displayed in the Table 4, the ancient/archaic concept/word *Ad’aaba*, which is literally Ad’a-aba ‘Mother-Father’ (also accented/corrupted due longer evolutionary process to *Adaabbaa*, *Adaamaa*, *D’oobbaa*, *Ṭoobboo*, *D’amoot’a*) designates “ancient lineage and Oromohood” connected by *utt’ubaa* ‘pillar’, whose productive/active ritual (although dramatically de-activated since the advent of Christian and Islamic beliefs) is *Dibaayyu//D’ibaara* a ritual equivalent to the Christian trinity concept that involves the ritual of anointing and painting (*d’iba*) the giant evergreen sycamore trees (*oqa*) and the Mother Earth/Cradle Land (*Daččee*) with butter, milk, honey, blood of sacrificial animal; the landscape of the ritual necessarily be riverbank forested with at *Oqaa* trees and called *Areerii Gooroo* or, depending on especial differences, *Aq’iboora*, both roughly translates ‘Cradle Land’. It is in actuality the ceremony equivalent to Christian Trinity but of thanking Ancestral Mothers-Fathers, originators of greenery, fertility and fecundity. As a verb, *ad’aaba* meaning ‘to parent, establish, erect; educate, discipline, punish’, the origin of Oromo concept of ‘Discipline and Punish’, a fact that reminds us the paradigm-shifting project of the great French philosopher, Michel Foucault. Considering the radicals/consonants, arbitrary insertion of vocalic sounds by Egyptologists as well as some normal sound changes/alternation (e.g. d~t/t’), we can compare Oromo *Aad’aaba* and Egyptian Atum while noting the Swiss Egyptologist Eric Hornung who expounded: “Atum is the god ‘who in the beginning was everything,’ complete in the sense of being an undifferentiated unity and at the same time nonexistent because existence is impossible before his work of creation” (quoted by Bernal 2006: 468).

5.4 ANALYSES OF OLD NUBIAN AND OROMO LEXICAL ITEMS

5.4.1. *Monosyllabic Words*

The Old Nubian lexical data for the following analysis are obtained from Rowan (2006). Rowan, in turn, states that the “corpus is taken from Browne (1996) and was selected whereby the following verbal forms were omitted; (i) all monoconsonantal forms; (ii) compound verbal stems; (iii) reduplicated verbal stems and (iv) the Greek loan πιστευ(ει)- ‘to believe’” (ibid: 197). Here a ‘supralinear stroke above a sign’ is avoided for it is not suitable; according to Browne (2002:12, cited in Rowan, 2006: 196) it indicates “a consonant to be pronounced as if /i/ preceded.”

Table 5: Old Nubian monosyllabic words and their equivalents in Oromo

OLD NUBIAN	OROMO
(ε)ι, ειαρ “to know”	ē “intr. okay, affirm, assert, allow; to succeed, success”; eera “nominate, select”; ila “behold, look”
ακ- “to sit	kâ “to put, lay, place”
ανκ- “to remember”	dʼaga dʼanga, “relief, commemoration feast”
δι “die”	qu ^ɿ “to die; death”
γασ- “to exult”	kasa “to lift up, take up, raise, praise”, guḍa “reverend, exult God”
γαλλ- “to open”	gara “to depart, stray, diverge”, gara-gara (recipr.); karra “gate”; gaari “open-heart, fair”

5.4.2 Disyllabic words

Table 6: Old Nubian disyllabic words and equivalents in Oromo

OLD NUBIAN	OROMO
ειαρ- “to know”	ayara “to know somebody, that only you underrate him/her and he/she overrates you”; eera “nominate, select”, araya, hirriya ‘befriend a co-equal age’
αγεί-- “to make”	akã “to liken, measure, impersonate, imitate, iconize”
άρορ- “to forget”	qaxa(dʼa) “to rubbish, trash”; dyaala, “postp., to forget”; aḡuli “absent-minded”;
έκο(v)γγ- “to release”	akk-esa “iconize, impersonate”; lakiza (caus., of lakk) “to release”; qarqara ‘succor’
άρμυ- “to judge”	bero-ča “judge-ACC; pharaoh-ACC”

τεει- “to hope”	ṭā, taya “aux., be; shall, shall be”, <i>tarri</i> ‘might, maybe’
δίγε- “to fight”	<i>d’ā</i> “to beat strike”; <i>d’ad’a</i> “to guard, defend”; <i>qaka</i> “to grind (also military)”
σείγειδ- “to mock”	<i>ṣagada</i> ‘pray, reify, deify’, <i>č’ačada</i> “to crack, mock, prevent from succeeding”
κογκογ- “to think”	<i>k’ua</i> “to enquire”; <i>qoraa</i> “to inquire, read, examine”
τίσσαν- “to hinder”	<i>tezisa, tadziza</i> “hold back, contain”

5.4.3 Trisyllabic Words

Table 7: Old Nubian trisyllabic words versus their Oromo equivalents

OLD NUBIAN	OROMO
ισαγει- “to be sweet”	šaḡee “sweetheart, girlfriend”; <i>čõxara</i> “to sugar, sweeten, appease”, <i>cuḡara</i> “sugar”; <i>čóxo>čókko</i> “chicken”
άμαδ(ει)σ- “to hasten”	ama “instantly, now, whilst, during”, <i>d’amā</i> “to be busy running to and fro”; <i>amadya, amačč’a</i> “to mess, exacerbate”; <i>amaḏaḡu</i> “(to be) extremist, enemy, adversary”
έκοεα- “to thank”	šaḡḡa “Excellent! Thanks!”
αυυαγει- “to fear”	šaḡka “to doubt, be cautious of, feel the shakiness of”; <i>šašaḡka</i> (redup.)
μογδογ(ει)- “to lead”	<i>moḡa</i> “to be on the outside (military)”; <i>moḡa d’aqa</i> “to go to lead, to go to the front”

5.4.4 Verbs with Identical Consonants

Identical consonants, for instance, refer to *οκκαρ*- “to attend to” versus *πίκκ*- “to awake”, for the key common consonants are kk, etc.

Table 8: Old Nubian verbs with identical consonants and equivalents in Oromo

Old Nubian	Oromo
οκκαρ- “to attend to”	wakkor! “attend!”, qaallu ‘attendant’, waré “attention”
σίλλιγρ- “pay attention to”	ilala “to see, watch, behold”; <i>č’alala</i> “select, pick out, identify, clarify”; <i>č’alalaa</i> “spark, twinkle”; <i>alalča</i> “nibble”; <i>ḡalala</i> “love”
πίκκ- “to awake”	beka “to know”; <i>ba(ra)ga</i> “to apprehend”
κακ/ογνν- “to bear”	akaku “consanguous; kins(wo)man”; <i>akeka</i> “to liken,

κμμ- “to beat”	measure, compare”; aka “like”; qanania “to be cockered, faddled, ill-bred”, kunūnza “to comfort, nurse”
αλλ-/τκκαρ- “to bind”;	k’oma, k’omama “to beat to death”
γρρ- “to fix”; τογλλ- “to endure”	arara “to fix dispute”; ṭakala “to tie up, yoke animals feet to milk, etc”; ṭakala “to endure suffer, suppression”
κεικ- “to blaspheme”	k’EEK’a “to violet moral standard; criticism; sarcasm”
τασσ - “to call”	dačaša “to call , bring home”
πασ(σ)- “to cease”	baša “to let go, to pardon, forgive”
γαππρ-/σοσ- “to cede”	baša “to let go, to pardon, forgive”
γπρτ(ρ)- “to change”	ḏabarta “change”
κίριγρ- “to complete”	k’ark’ra/gargara “to assist somebody to complete a task”
δεκκίγρ- “to conceal”	ḏ’ok’a “to conceal, hide”
μίδδ- “to condemn”	baḏa “bad, condemned”; ḏ’ad’a “to condemn”
τοκ(κ)- “to cook”	k’ok’a “to cook”
γοδδ- “to cut down”	kuṭa “to cut”, refl, kuṭad’a ; ḡuḡeḡa “to deflower”
γαγγ- “to deny”	kaka “to swear, deny against”
κογκκ- “to descend”	dagaga “to descend (generation)”; ḏ’ak’ak’a “to be crooked”
δολλ- “to desire”	ḏ’arra “to desire”
δαππρ- “to destroy”	ḏ’iba “to be removed, thrown away”; ḏ’ib(a)sa “to remove, delete”; barba(r)deza “to annihilate; to cause to be lacked”
ερερρ- “to devise”	ura “to pierce; make, devise, design; make a child, copulate; to perceive, penetrate by knowledge”; alela “to hammer out, forge”
έκκ- “to direct, instruct, lead”	akeka “to instruct, direct, indicate, mark”
πασ(σ)-/τομτ- “to divide”	basa “to cause go out, away, apart”; bača “melt, smelt; ḡumḡu, ṭumaṭu “smith”; ḡumja “smite”
δππ- “to draw (paint)”	ḡiba “to paint, annoint”
πασσαρ- “to enquire”	baṣaṣa “to enquire, spy”
κογσσ(ρ)- “to enter”	ḡiḡiṣa “onom., to mob; to crowd”
κοσσ- “to establish”	k’adada “seal, ratify”; kaṣa “to lift up, take up, erect, establish” from kâ “to rise, get up; put, preserve; begin, commence”
τορπαρ- “to farm”	ḡaraba “animal farming; herding of livestock”; ḡira “to plough, make a furrow”
παρρ- “to fly”	barara “to take wing, hover, fly, sail”
τογφφ- “to spit”	t’uffa, ṭuffa “to spit”
μεσσ- “to stand”	mač’a, mač’a-na “to draw near, step up”; mač’ača, mač’arakṣa “to crush by treading on, to tread down”
κακκίρ- “to strengthen”	kakar- “to tighten, close vehemently”; dakk’ara/daṅk’ara “to rail, bar”
τοσ(σ) - “to strike”	t’iya “bow-arrow”; ḏ’ā “to strike, beat”
εφφ- “to suffer”	uffay “interj., to express weakness and pain”; obafa “to be relieved from suffer, pain; to deliver the placenta, to reach the end, to suffer to the end, to endure”; ḡobaṭi “placenta”
απρ- “to take”	arara “to take, compromise”
ογλλ- “to teach”	q’araa, qaraḡa “to read, write, to delineate, engrave”; gerara “to sing warlike song”
απ(π)-/καρρ- “to	aba/ q’araa “a man of /learning”

grasp” ol(l)- “to hang”	<i>rara</i> “to hang, intr.”, <i>raraṣa</i> (causative); <i>olala</i> “to be pointed upwards”
τίσσαν- “to hinder” καρρ- “to hold” πλλάιγπ- “to illumine” οκκδ- “commit injustice”	<i>teziza</i> , <i>tessiṣa</i> “hinder” (from <i>tá</i> “to seat”) <i>k’urura</i> “to gnaw”; <i>bala(la)q’e</i> “to scintillate, illumine; lightening flash” <i>yakka</i> “to commit a crime, injustice”; <i>yakkad’a</i> “refl., to be a criminal, convict, lawbreaker”; <i>yakka dǎ</i> “to punish, to sentence” <i>baṣa</i> “to investigate” (lit., to make go out)”
πασ(σ)- “to investigate” πεϰϰ(ρ)- “to judge” εφφ-/ραδδ- “to rejoice”	<i>baṣaza</i> “to spy upon; to search, investigate” <i>hoffu</i> , <i>hoffee</i> “interj., amen!; to come to light, happiness, safety; to survive”; <i>gadoda</i> “to bellow, roar; to cry from pain”
πλλάιγπ- “to reveal” πασσ “to rise (sun)” πασ(σ)- “to separate” ακδακ- “to set up”	<i>bilbila</i> “to glisten, glitter, beam”; <i>bilille</i> “glass” <i>bǎ</i> “to rise (sun)”; <i>bǎṭi</i> “shine (moon, sun)” <i>baṣa</i> “to separate” <i>kā</i> “to set up, establish”; <i>kāq’a</i> “to rise up”; <i>kayaḍ’a</i> “to put, lay or reserve (for) oneself” <i>c’ua</i> , <i>k’uṭa</i> “to study, learn (lit., to split, curve out)” <i>ḥeḍa</i> , <i>ḥaḍ’a</i> “to look into” (ḥ)ik’a “to move oneself” <i>ḡa(r) mama</i> “to tread, stride; tourney” <i>k’illee</i> “abyss”; <i>k’ā</i> “to have an opening, to dawn”; <i>bak’ak’a</i> “open up, crack, go asunder” <i>qaallu</i> ‘priest, pop, holy, black’, <i>qalqullu</i> , <i>qulqullu</i> ‘holy, clean, neat, absolute, innocent, blameless’; <i>ḡalala</i> “branches of sacred tree, carried during pray and sacrificial ceremony”; <i>ḡaḍ’aḍ’a</i> “to pray” <i>qiba</i> “to paint, anoint”; <i>qibama</i> “to be anointed” <i>d’aba</i> “perish”; <i>d’abama</i> “to be vanished” <i>zoka</i> “to fly, go away”; <i>zokokza</i> “to stir, move one’s self”; <i>ṣaḡara</i> “to to proceed” <i>quḡuḡa</i> “to uproot, peel off, wipe out”
κογα- “to learn” εδεδ- “to look in” εῖκ- “to move” κμμ - “to knock upon” γαλλ-/κακ-/ποκκ- “to open” σιλελ(ρ)- “to pray”	
δμμ- “to paint” δαππ- “to perish” σογσρ- “to proceed”	
δογκκ- “to uproot”; κακ(ς)- “to wipe away” μαλλ(ε)- “to turn” παρρ- “to whirl” μογκκ- “to rage” άδδ- “to make ready”	<i>mara/marra</i> “to turn; to encircle; to roll, wrap up” <i>barara</i> , <i>balalia</i> “to whirl” <i>bakakka</i> “rage of God; thunder” <i>yad’ad’a</i> “to make a plan for; to reflect”; <i>ḡaḍ’aḡ’a</i> “to ally”; <i>ḡoḡ’a(d’a)</i> “to make something (for oneself)” <i>ḡoḡ’aḡ’a</i> “to procreate, to give birth to” <i>dak’aga</i> “a crooked piece of board suitable for making plough”; <i>daṇqaraa</i> “to close with a bar/pole”; <i>dagaga</i> “gigantic bull with tall hump”, esp., for sacrificial slaughtering
δγνν “to produce” δογκκ- “to yoke”	
ογρ- “to proclaim” εκκδδρ- “to prophecy”	<i>rraaga</i> “to prophesy”; (Waaqa) <i>kakaḍ’a</i> “to swear, take an oath in the name of Waqa—God”; <i>Wak’a kakaḍ’a</i> “pray, worship God”

δοκ(κ)- “to worship”	d’iikk’a, d’iiga “blood, in religious ceremonies”; dekk’a/deqi “the animal to be immolated”
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5.4.5 Words with Homorganic Consonants

The Old Nubian data in the following table shows a further 24 verb forms that contain homorganic consonants: κ/γ/ř - /k/, /g/, /ŋ/; λ/ρ - /l/, /r/; μ/π/φ - /m/, /p/, /f/; δ/τ - /d/, /t/ (Rowan, 2006: 189). In the second column are corresponding Oromo lexemes obtained with little or no changing from Tutschek (1844).

Table 9: Old Nubian verbs with homorganic consonants versus Oromo equivalent

OLD NUBIAN	OROMO
κετρ- “to care for”	ka’a “leave (something to care of somebody)”; ka’ata/kaayata “entrustment (something given as)”; ega “to have a care of”; egad’a “to have a care for self”
κορ- “to cleanse”	k’ori (acc. k”oridza) “to cleanse, to medicate oneself” k’ûla, k’ûlk’ula “to be clean, pure; to be cleansed”
κορ- “to purify”	č’ala, č’alala “to purify”, k’ulk’ulu “clean, pure”; k’alu “sacred”
κίριγ(ρ)- “to complete”	k’ulã (k’uleza trans.) “to complete”; q’it’ã, qit’esa “to (be) complete”
δεκκίρ- “to conceal”	d’ok’a “to duck”; d’ok’sa “to conceal”; d’ok’ad’a “to hide”
ρόκορ- “to marvel at”	qiqira “to titillate, to tickle”
ρόκ- “to omit”	kã “to reserve”; kakã “to omit, disaccustom; to swear”
ρόκ- “to pass away”	qaa (ğed’a) “to pass away”; qóma, qomama “to die suddenly”; ġoga “intr., to dry, to die”
σλγř- “to trample”	šalaqa(qa) “to flake off, decorticate”
πελίρ- “to admit”	bala, wala “to admit, give way”
κελ(αρ)- “to beseech”	kakad’a “to swear, beseech”;
ογλγ(ρ)- “to hear”	q’agay ^a “to hear”; ruga raga “(to tell) fable, saga, legend”
πλλιγρ- “to illumine”	bilillí “to glitter; glass”; balaq’i “splendor, brightness” č”alalqa “to illumine, irradiate, brighten”
σίλελ(ρ)- “to pray”	ğāla “godfather, reverend”; djala(la) “to veneer”; kaq’ad’a “to pray”; qaallu, qulluu ‘priest, pop, holy, black’, qalqullu, qullqullu ‘holy, clean, neat, absolute, innocent, blameless’
παδείφ- “to transgress”	badi “intr., to spoil; to vanish”; badofã “excommunicated, violator of moral standard”
τοδ(ε)- “to encounter”;	tuca, t’uk’ad’a “to meet with, to find”
τογδ- “to hunt”	dúka “to go behind, hunt down”; “behind, after”
δοτ- (?) “to enter”	qačã, qača? “to go or come back home in large number”
καδγγ “to broadcast”	gađa, gađa “to throw, cast away”; gađi kakã “scatter, lit., put here and there”
δογτ- “to adorn”	dók’a “a string of pearls around the limbs”
παδείφ- “to transgress”	bada “to spoil; to vanish”; badofã “excommunicated, violator of moral standard”

5.4.6 Compound and Reduplicated Verbal Stems

According to Rowan, Old Nubian compound verbal stems are made by compounding two separate verbal forms such as $\mu\alpha\delta\sigma\alpha\gamma\acute{\epsilon}$ - “to tell lies” which compounds the verbs $\mu\alpha\delta\sigma$ - ‘lie’ + $\alpha\gamma\acute{\epsilon}$ - ‘to say’. Also, according to Rowan, there exist several verbal forms in Old Nubian that are reduplicated verb stems, such as $k\bar{u}y-k\bar{u}y$ - “to envy” (Oromo *qott’issa* “to envy”; *t’aat’aa* “explode, perturb, disturb”) and $k\alpha c-k\alpha c$ - “to draw (water)” (Oromo *k’ačaačaa* ‘pool (water)’; *k’ač’aač’aa* ‘to drizzle, shower (lengthy)’). One might also be interested in Oromo *sik’sik’a* ‘spiraling’ (reduplication from *sik’a* ‘move, move out of the way, stand aside’), *çukuçuk*- ‘to whisper and backbite; to stir’, *şukuşóka* ‘to leave in a clandestine way, to slip away, to trot’ from *şoka* ‘to leave, go’. Similar words are, for example, *hažaza*, *şokoza*, *şoşokoza*, , *zikza*, *zikzika*, etc. These are neither ‘compound’ nor ‘reduplication’ in traditional sense. Rather they are what Tutschek (1846:13) describes as “onomatopoeticals” or imitators of natural sounds. Tutschek lists these example lexemes accurately: *k’ak’ak’-*, *talal-*, *dobloq-*, *qa-*, *qiq-*, *k’aw-*, *č’am-*, *č’al-*, *birrr-*, *k’at^ak’at’-*. We can add: *džafđžaf-*, *dididid-*, *taltal-*, *balbal-*, *f’rrr-*, *walwal-*, *walal-*, *dirrrr-*, *mut’ut’-*, *kokol-*, *t’il-*, etc. These cannot be complete without the postpositive intransitive verb *ğâđ’e/đžâđ’e* “said, sounded, felt, performed, enacted” (perfective from *ğă/đžă* “says, performs”) or the transitive form *ğod^a* “make” (or *ğod^aađe/ğod^aađe* “make REFL perfective”). For instance, *k’ak’ak’ ġâđ’e* “it said/sounded *k’ak’ak’*”, the kind of natural sound produced as when something cracks. The sound produced when water is drawn, for instance, is *d’oblok’ đžâđ’e* (Tutschek 1844:79). *T’il ġâđ’e* mean ‘It has gotten/become inundated/overcrowded’ and *walwal/walaal ġâđ’e* means ‘It has gotten/become clear’ (of clear sky after dark cloud cover).

Therefore, Rowan’s Old Nubian “compound verbal stems” must be similar to these Oromo verbal groups. Although Tutschek might be right to describe these as “onomatopoeticals”, however, beyond natural ‘sounds’ imitations, these verbs, whose ‘primitive’ base/stem/roots reduplicate (twice, trice, or four times) to enfold iterative natural ‘governments’, homomorphic patterns or ontic categories

such as: tallness, differentiations, frequentativeness, duplicity, parallelness, pairedness, zigzagness, symmetricality, dialecticality, reciprocity, intensiveness, continuum, increase (extend in size), etc. Still, it appears that the root that reduplicate is *semelfactive* verb, a verb that enfolds an event/act which takes place once only, contrasting with *iterative* verb which expresses an event/act which takes place repeatedly.

This kind of homomorphism and sonority must have come from proto-linguistic features through evolutionary social history of the Oromo-Cushites. Professor Claude Sumner, who has produced three volume analysis of Oromo wisdom literature argues that like any “ancient texts”, in Oromo wisdom literature, “a same unit of formal characters, namely of expressions, of syntactic forms, of vocabulary, of metaphors...recur over and over again, and finally a vital situation...that is a same original function in the life of [the people]” (Sumner, 1996:19). This is a feature “surely has developed within the [Oromo] language” and “is also only imaginable in a sonorous language such as Oromo” which “as a prerequisite, [has] a formally highly developed poetical technique” (Littmann, 1925:25 cited in Bartels, 1975: 899). Claude Sumner formulates a “double analogy” tactic as prototypical feature of Oromo wisdom literature, i.e., “vertical” and “horizontal” parallelism style (Sumner, 1996: 25), known for the most part to linguists as, respectively, ‘paradigmatic’ (‘content’ or ‘material’) and ‘syntagmatic’ (‘form’ or ‘substance’) relations or contextual-diachronic and textual-synchronic relations.

5.5. MORE MEROE-NUBIAN-OROMO COMPARATIVE ANALYSES

The Meroitic-Old Nubian data (Table 10) are obtained from Aubin (2003), who collected them from various sources. The Meroitic lexis is non-categorical and undefined. They are only assumed to be related to the Old Nubian correspondents. Thus, the role of the corresponding Oromo in the third column is great in reducing the skepticism. In other words, the Oromo words considerably enhance the genetic relationship among the three languages.

Table 10: Meroitic, Old Nubian Oromo lexical cognates

Meroitic	Old Nubian	Oromo
qo- “honorific for noble person”	ko “master”	go-ofa “honorific: Master, Lord” and gii-fti “Mistress” from gā-of-tēa “be heavy-DAT- ACC. MASC”; ko “GEN my greatly beloved”
<i>qore</i> “sovereign, king”; <i>pqr</i> “prince”; <i>qara</i> as “north”	oyroy “chief, king” (Dongola and Kenuz: <i>ur</i> or <i>uru</i> “chief, king”)	aba “(title “man of, proprietor of”); aba qoro “nobleman, aristocrat, senate”; qoro “hawk”, č’uŋto’ “eagle, horsekite”, rágā/ʔaragesa “raven, crow” ; qara “sharp; beam (of stars)”; qara “top”; q’ore- ti “noon-LOC; up/north-LOC”
<i>ni</i> or /na-yi/	roeiō “oil”	<i>ogió/ogiyo</i> “cardamom”; <i>núǵí</i> “black gingelly, oil-yielding plant; oil”
tke/-ke (epistolary) ??	oyēð/toek “to be distant/power” ðayé or ðayei “to be great” (Coptic λεβλωβ “high” or “tall”)	tike “shepherd”; hik’a “to go away”; <i>ango</i> “strength, force, power” <i>loqloqa, lo#oqa</i> “to become taller and taller”; <i>luǵe</i> “to be long and tender”
dh (as in <i>adhite</i>) ??	σay “to proclaim?”	çaaqá “to unveil”; çaaqa, şaaqa “saga”; ; ad’i “white”, ad’ad’a “to be white; to beam, shine, glitter; to be false, untrue”
ato ??	ετω, ασε “water”	ittō “sauce”, aetu “curd”, ótta ‘amniotic fluid’; ʔak’a “heaven, rain, sky, God”
-o as in <i>Qomo-o</i> “make; made”	εic “(root for) work or effect”	ɕǵâ “say, effect, work”, (h)odǵi /hadǵâ ‘effort, work, purpose, project’; ʕuma ‘make, create, invent’; Umoo/Uumaa “Creator”

The autochthonous *núǵí* “black gingelly, oil-yielding plant; oil” (*Guizotia oleifera*) and the less studied spice for coffee, namely *ogió/ogiyo* (also *korarimā*) “cardamom” (*Amomum cardamomum*) are antique and domestication by the Oromo (see Paulitschke 1893: 162; Massaja 1867:383).

5.6. SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEMIOTIC OBSERVATIONS

Among interesting cognate-data in the above table (Table 10) are cultural themes/lexemes of nobles. During his archaeological survey, Henze (2005) found in the Arsi Oromo land, presently Islamic religion followers, a “monument” he described as follows although he curtails the temporality into recent times for his usual biased Indo-Semitist or Abyssinianist attitude:

[T]his monument features a mounted figure on top holding a spear or club in his right hand and a shield in his left. The bottom third has a large lion with a curved-back tail. A smaller slab, about a meter in height, leans against the larger one. It, too, is carved on both sides. On one side a figure wielding a stick or club stands on top of a four-footed animal apparently meant to be a horse. On the reverse a long-horned bull and a shield are carved. When I stopped to photograph these monuments in 1993, a local man told me that the monument marked the burial place of Washok Kerasso, who had been a prominent local citizen ‘well before the change’ (Henze 2005: 180).

Possibly, Henze is ‘speaking’ about Fig 1 A (left) that one scholar (Waamii 2014: 38) estimates to 29, 000 years BP.



Tomb of Oromo Qoro ‘Noble’
Kerasso (Arsi K’arsa)



Tomb of Meroe Qore ‘King’ Silko
(Edwards 2004: 198)



Oromo horse expert

A: Oromo Qoro and Meroe “Qore” tombs

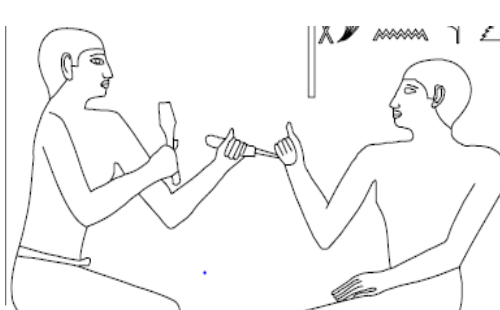
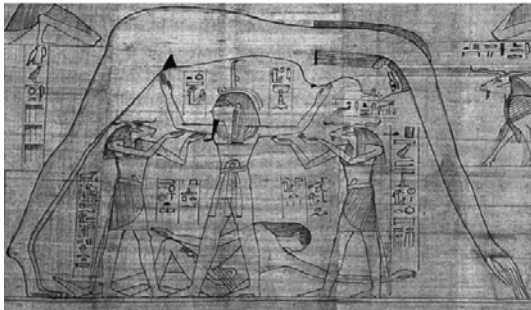


Figure 1

Figure 1B display Ancient Egyptian anthropomorphic paintings. On the left is a portrayal of their general worldview. According to Egyptologists, here, “Nut” the “sky-goddess”, “described as a long-homed celestial cow”, “the mother of Osiris, Isis, Seth” (compare with Oromo Adēfī/Aṭeeṭee ‘matriarchic side of the cosmos and feminine fertility goddess, especially of iḡâé / -ssi ‘the woman’ or niitii ‘wife, female spouse/couple’ and ḡâā ‘the cow’; see Kumsa 1997; Kassam, 1999:494; Sumner, 1997:193; Bartels, 1975:91) is in vaulting position over the recumbent body of “Geb” the “Earth-god” (note the Oromo *Qubaa/Qeeâbaa* ‘ Own Selve Settlement Area, Holdings, Country-estate’), with “Shu” the “air-god” (note the Oromo *qîḥénça/qôḥénça* ‘air, stratosphere, air’ and *Qaallačča* ‘the spiritual Father’) holding her up with both arms, assisted by two “gods”. The Booran Oromo worldview is worth quoting:

The Booran view of cosmology, ecology and ontology is one of a flow of life emanating from God. For them, the benignancy of divinity is expressed in rain and other conditions necessary for pastoralism. The stream of life flows through the sprouting grass and the mineral waters [hooro] of the wells, into the fecund wombs and generous udders [*gurr’ú*] of the cows. The milk from the latter then promotes human satisfaction and fertility. When people are satisfied by the yield of their herds, they live happily and peacefully together...thereby creating a balance between people and Divinity, and reproducing favourable conditions (Dahl & Megerssa 1990: 26).

As recorded by Lambert Bartels, *Waaqa* ‘Devine, God, Sky’ symbolizes *Abbá*, Patriarchic-side of the cosmos (*qoollo*) or Father/ Husband “who goes away” while, *Daččee* ‘Earth’ symbolizes, the Matriarchic-side, Mother or Wife who “is always with us” (Bartels, 1983: 108-111) and “originally, Heaven and Earth were standing one next to the other on equal terms” (Haberland 1963: 563 quoted by Bartels 1983:111).

In the middle of Fig.1 B is perhaps Egyptian-qua-Oromo *Bokkuu* Scepter/Power Exchange, with some funny element of disconfiguring of the original with the intention to Europinize/Whitize the anthropomorphic or the civilization. After serving for full eight-year term, the *Abba Bokkuu* ‘Father of the Scepter’ must

celebrate *Bokkuu Walira Fuud'a* (first meaning “to exchange *bokkuu*, scepter/power”), a *Gada system* concept that refers to two socio-political “events as a single act of “exchange”” (Legesse 1973:81): (1) the event of power “take over ceremony”, i.e., the symbolic act of “the incoming class” and (2) the event of power “handover ceremony”, i.e., the symbolic act of “the outgoing class”. This power-exchange is also called, as Legesse (1973:81-82; 2006:125) accurately deciphered, *Baallii Walirá Fúd'a* “Power Exchange” or “transfer of ostrich feathers”, one of the insignias of the ritual. De Salviac describes the scepter *bokkuu* “has the shape of a voluminous aspergillum (a container with a handle that is used for sprinkling holy water) or of a mace of gold of the speaker of the English parliament, but in iron and at the early beginning in hard wood” (de Salviac 2005 [1901]: 216). In the *hieroglyphica* of Egyptians “When they would symbolise *a man who distributes justice impartially to all*, they depict the Feather of an Ostrich; for this bird has the feathers of its wings equal on every side, beyond all other birds” (Horapollo 1840: 215), and Pthah “occasionally wears a disk with the lofty ostrich feathers of Osiris, and holds in each hand a staff of purity, in lieu of the emblems of stability and life” (Wilkinson 1840: 252).

One might well wonder why the ancients are too zoophilic of horse (bull) and lion? Why did they consistently draw these on the tombs of their noblemen? Even Oromo oral historians tell us that the Oromo used to bury their horses of their (great) men alongside the tombs of the owners quite similar to what Arkell (1955: 123-124) shows us: “the Nubian kings of the Kush” who “made fetishes out of horses” and, even, “buried” their horses “alongside the royal families”. It is Oromo ethical philosophy to call a man who has already fathered child(ren) with the syntax: {*Abba* + *FIRST-BORN CHILD'S NAME*}, or {*Abba* + *HORSE NAME*}, or {*Abba* + *WORRAA/MANAA* + *WIFE'S NAME*}.¹⁹ It is socially taboo to call a

¹⁹ The interchangeable neuter-gender *worra-a* and *mana-a* mean, respectively, ‘head of family of’ and ‘headman of house of’ and each can be used for a husband or a wife. The sequence *Abba* + *Worra-a* literally translates/calques the Biblical expression “husband wife (of)” or *Abba* + *Manaa* + *WIFE's NAME* “husband man (of)”. Several similar Biblical calques on Oromo idioms can be listed from the King James English version, but for limits of spacetime we can only add: ‘Mr. X carried away the daughter of Mr. Y’ (designated by the verb *fuud'a* ‘carry away, marry (male

father/mother of a child by his/her first or second or whatsoever name most probably because he/she is at one with his/her children and hence multitudinal—children morally belong to no single individual/father/mother but to ‘I-WE’. For this philosophical reason, the Oromo adage goes: *Farda fi nîfiid’ān maqaa nama d’aani* ‘It is by the name of the horse or the wife, that the man/husband is called/addressed’. For similar reason, the polysemous words *ad’a* ‘mother, wife of’ (*adq’é/ad’oo*, vocative) and *abba/βaa* ‘father, subject, owner’ (*βoo/abbo*, vocative) both equally designate ‘begetter of, owner of, leader of, dispenser, guardian, origin, absolutive-genitive case’ (Bartels 1983: 372). Gidada (1984: 128) documents:

The respect given to him [the Father, the Patriarch] was symbolized in the way he was addressed by them [all members of the family]. His children, apart from calling him father, i.e., aabboo, or baabboo [-oo ‘vocative respectfulness], had to refer to him in the third person pronoun *isin*, meaning “You” (respectful) instead of *sii* (you, singular) and *isaan*, meaning “He” (respectful) instead of *isa* (he, third person)... Sometimes he was also addressed as *abbaa* ‘So-and-So’, the attribute being the name of a son, of a horse or the main trait in his character.

Primarily let’s note that the generic word/concept *korma/sanga* designates all the following inasmuch as they have the traits {MALENESS + VIRILITY combined with intrepidity}: manly man, son, boy, lion, tiger/leopard, horse, buffalo, bull, ram, bird of prey. The bull is selected because, as Baxter (1979: 71, 82-84) deciphered accurately, in Oromo culture “big game hunting for trophies [were] considered as a pursuit that fostered “manly” attributes; successful hunter was, like a good warrior or a prolific father, *d’iira* “male, masculine, intrepid, virile”, *džaba* “tough, bullock” or *korma* “bull”, which means a “successful warrior”, for he has “become responsible for the nation”. For this reason, if a father did not father a son but only daughter(s), he must be called after his horse-name {Abbá + HORSE’S NAME} because the steed or male horse is like the son: a bulwark of his life, family and nation. As Gidada accurately pointed out, the horse’s name

only’); ‘Mr. X carried away all his cattle’ (*bád’sa* ‘carry away, get cattle graze’), ‘X touched the hollow of his thigh’ (*guḍeefuḍa* ‘seize/touch between own thighs; be bulwark to, adopt a child AUTOBENEFACTIVE’), etc. See Bartels (1984) and de Salviac (1901) for more Biblical cultural idioms calqued on Oromo.

follows the syntax: Abba ‘proprietor of’ + what it CAN DO (to our perception and/or in its unique capacity, action). In a similar way, *ilma abba*, “son of father” means “noble” (Ceruilli 1922: 45), for *korma* ‘horse-bull, buffalo-bull’ are symbol of tough, brave macho-man Baxter (1979: 71).

What about the nexus of lion, nobleman and tomb arts? Bekerie (1997: 83) correlates the Biblical dogma “Ethiopia stretches her hands to God” with *Ethiopic* or Ge’ez *u/Hä/* and *ʾ/Pä/* (together *HäPä* translates ‘Beginning, alpha and End, omega’), and, with the Classical Greek *alpha* (Α, α) ‘beginning’ and *omega* (Ω, ω) ‘end’ and with Egyptian-Meroitic hieroglyph of a wo/man stretching her/his arms up to the heaven.

EGYPTIAN/MEROITIC	‘ETHIOPIC’	MEANING
 HÄ	 HÄ	THE BEGINNING
 PEH	 PÄ	THE END



Egyptian/Meroitic v. “Ethiopic” Signs

Oromo *irreessa* ‘tomb’ (Scott 1950)

Figure 2

Figure 2, right, is Arsi Oromo memorial *irreessa* ‘tomb’, literally ‘put On-High, Above!; raise hands, be possessed’, from *irree* ‘arms’ or *irra* ‘above, higher’. See the carving with the same image of anthropomorphic raising both arms. . It is also good to note that Egyptian hieroglyphic pictogram of forearms or foreparts of a lion stands for */l/*. At another place, Bekerie interpreted the syllogism for *Λ /lä, /lawe* (1997: 93),²⁰ which he never defined, and for *Δ /rä, r/ räis* ‘head’ (p. 85).²¹ According to the Ancient Egyptian grammarians and semioticians the “forearms”

²⁰ In Meroitic the lion-forearm pictogram stands for the phoneme */l/* while the Egyptian word for ‘lion’ is *rw* (or by rhotics, *lw*). In Oromo *fēpč’a* ‘lion’ a substantive-absolutive from */ōa* ‘to crawl, to inch’, which also derives *lowa* ‘crawler, crawling’. The Oromo picturesque *lawwee* designates ‘slender, tall and slim, cheetah’.

²¹ But, this concept *räis* ‘head’ appears the usual creation of Amharic words from Oromo by alchemization, here, from *Qaallu*’s ‘a Spiritual Father’s’ *Irreessa*, his “righthands” or “emissaries” (Hassen, 1994: 9).

or “foreparts of a lion”, put under the throne of Horus, is portrayed to signify “intrepidity, strength” (Horapollon 1840: 36-37). Similarly, in Oromo worldview:

While speaking of man’s strength, [Oromo] think first of all his arms. [They] say of such a man: ‘*iṛe qaba*—he has *iṛe*’. [They] say the same of *Waaqa* [God]—*iṛen Waaqa si had’ahu*—May *Waaqa*’s *iṛe* strike you’. Our people believe that it is an animal’s forelegs that make it run fast. It’s with his forelegs that a lion or leopard grasps his prey and attacks man... The association of arm-forelegs-power and the prohibition of eating the animal’s forelegs [for which, in Oromo belief system, a lion, too, is known] are not only found among the Oromo. We also find them, e.g. with the early Hebrews, whose life and thought have many features in common with the Oromo’s (Bartels 1983: 156).

Moreover, the Oromo lexeme for ‘forelegs’, *iṛé/rree*, also designates ‘arm, power, muscle, strength’. Through suffixation of the animatizer morpheme, it forms the powerful animals *ṭeeṛč’a/ṛeeṛč’a* ‘lion’ or *ṇāḍḍa* ‘caiman, crocodile’ both mean ‘that which munches off’ (note the phonologization process $ṛ \leftrightarrow \text{ṭ} \leftrightarrow \text{ṇ}$). To consider the antiquity of this symbolization of the Booran moiety, who consider themselves as *Abbagudda* ‘the most high, barons, the male lion, king of the subjects’ (which Ge’ezologists corrupt to *Abugida* ‘the first’, with no or vain semantic entity since it is, for them, devoid of history and culture, as usual, and, hence, oscillates in vacuum).

As Bartels describes, “the perfect attitude at prayer in the [pre-Christian] in the Oromo’s eyes is to lift the hands towards heaven” (Bartels, 1983: 350). It is Oromo pre-Christian worldview to stretch the arms up to *Waaqa* ‘sky, Heaven, God’ while saying prayers. This is enfolded in the word (homophonic with the aforementioned *Makkoo*) *wakkoo* ‘the act of stretching hands up and apart’²² and uttering *Ḥók’uba* “Praise! Praise be upon God!”, which also refers to “the act of kneeling down and raising one’s hands with open fingers towards the sky (*Waaqa*) and thus submitting oneself to *Waaqa*” (Gidada, 1984: 163).²³ This

²² *Wakko* is augmentative word whose first meaning ‘wide open, rift’ which is related by root to the intransitive *Ḃak’a* ‘to dissect, bisect, rift, drift apart’ and *Ḃaaqqoo* ‘wilderness, vacuity’

²³ Possibly, *Ḥók’uba* comes from *ḥoṣ* “hello, take (always accompanied by extra- linguistic stretching of a hand to the receiver)” and *k’ub^a* ‘truth, just, finger’.

prototypical Oromo theological symbolic-speech act is based on the fundament that “Heaven opens its hands” (Kassam 2005:111). Egyptologists tell us Egyptian *Qa’a* means/is transliteration of “the one with raised arm”. But, this is possibly Oromo *qa’a* ‘to die suddenly, to be non-being, to become dry’ (usually collocated with the above perfective *ǧād’e* ‘performed, ached, said’). To the above Oromo concepts of *irreessa/irreeč’a* is related (etymologically and metonymically) the antique, indigenous ritual of *Irreeč’aa/Irreessa* Ritual of Thanking the Almighty *Waaqa* the Black Sky-God, for transcending, salvaging or traversing (*irra č’aa* or *irree(n) č’âa* literally “to cross over with strong arm” i.e., victoriously, triumphantly) for transiting Man from the dark, cloudy, rainy season to the brighter, sunny (new) year in September’. It is no surprise that external, Eurocentric paradigm might misinterpret the Egyptian:

The change to Sehetep, “the one who pacifies” and to *Qa’a* “the one with raised arm” reflect political developments, viz. *Qa’a* opposition to and eventual victory over two opponents (Kahl 2006: 99).

While Irreeč’aa/Irreessaa Malkaa is of the ‘Newlight Year of the Sun Goddess’ (*Džárree*) and conducted at valley river banks or spring waters in September 20s, the *Irreeč’aa/Irreessaa* Gooroo is conducted on highlands or mountain hills in March 20s and is of the New Celestial Virgin (*Bağğii*) i.e., Crescent Moon (*Baatsii*). A two-line excerpt from praise song of the day to the Mother Earth goes:

daččee yaa dinqituu --O you wondrous mother earth!
dzaartii garaa meetii -- ring-belly lady/wife

We also need to quote a praise song of the day reciting a moon shaped beauty (see Fig 3 below) of *Maağii* an ancient Oromo Queen Mother, which symbolizes her by *élé* ‘circular cooking pot made of clay as oven’ and “*bede*” (appropriately *baqđ’ee*) ‘smaller clay cooking pot as oven’ (also refers to pizza-like disc-bread made on the oven):

Admiration is for you, o <ele>
<But> I take out of <bede>
Admiration is for you, moon shaped beauty (Sumner 1996: 68).

She is also symbolized by *Baaġii* “a cow with downwards and again coiled horns around the ears”, itself a symbol of *bádzii/baptaii* ‘crown, throne’. For this reason these rituals are also called *Irreeč’aa/Irreessaa Adeetee* “Feminine Fertility Divinity”. We need to quote *The Secret Doctrine*²⁴ at large:

To the Rosicrucian, the “Rose” [*Siddissa*] was the symbol of Nature, of the ever prolific and virgin Earth, or Isis, the mother and nourisher of man, considered as feminine and represented as a virgin woman by the Egyptian Initiates. Like every other personification of Nature and the Earth she is the sister and wife of Osiris, as the two characters answer to the personified symbol of the Earth, both she and the Sun being the progeny of the same mysterious Father, because the Earth is fecundated by the Sun—according to the earliest Mysticism—by divine insufflation. It was the pure ideal of mystic Nature that was personified in the “World Virgins,” the “Celestial Maidens,” and later on by the human Virgin, Mary, the Mother of the Saviour, the *Salvator Mundi* now chosen by the Christian World. And it was the character of the Jewish maiden that was adopted by Theology to archaic Symbolism, [In Ragon’s *Orthodoxie Maconnique* p.105, *note*, we find the following statement—borrowed from Albumazar the Arabian, probably: “*The Virgin of the Magi and Chaldaans*. The Chaldaean sphere [globe] showed in its heavens a newly-born babe, called *Christ and Jesus*; it was placed in the arms of the Celestial Virgin. It was to this Virgin that Eratosthenes, the Alexandrian Librarian, born 276 years before our era, gave the name of Isis, mother of Horus.” This is only what Kircher gives (in *Adipus Agypticus*, iii. 5), quoting Albumazar: “In the first decan of the Virgin rises a maid, called Aderenosa, that is pure, immaculate virgin . . . sitting upon an embroidered throne nursing a boy . . . a boy, named Jesus . . . which signifies Issa, whom they also call Christ in Greek.” (See *Isis Unveiled*, ii. 491)] and not the Pagan symbol that was modelled for the new occasion (Except the first, all insertions original).

Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egyptian Vol. III²⁵ relates:

Decorated Ware of the Naqada II to III periods (3500-3100 BCE) represent the world of man and perhaps historical events, arranged in groups of related figures. Potters painted Nile scenes composed of boats at the center of the jar, bounded by trees and birds along the riverbank, with desert animals beyond. Some of these pots are adorned with the large figure of a woman standing on a boat cabin [*irreessa* “memorial tomb (chambered)?] with her arms raised, attended by smaller male figures. This female figure has been identified as a being, a goddess, a mourner, or a dancer (Square bracket added; see also Fig 3 top right).

²⁴ H.P. Blavatsky. *The Secret Doctrine, Volume 3*, publisher unknown but “Published in the late 1800’s”, p.238.

²⁵ D. B. Redford (Ed). 2001. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. III, p. 4.



ISIS and other Egyptian Queens (Redford, *Oxford Ency. Anc. Egyptian*, 2001, Vol. I & II, pp. 180, 188, 371, 415)



The Moon Shaped Beauty of Oromo 'Cleopatras' Singing the Praises *Irreeč'aa*

Figure 3:

Oromo-Cush Belles-- from Horn of Africa's *Baalee* to the Nile Valley's *Philae*

Beyond Africa, the Oromo equinoctial *Irreeč'aa/Irreessaa* ritual is definitely cognate with the Ancient Iranian-Avestan-Zoroastrian *Nowruz-Maġi*

cosmological- Eschatological ritual/belief systems. This must remind us the mono-annual Orthodox Christianity Church *Masqal*, literally “Cross” (phonological and semantic corruption of Oromo *Malkāessaa* “the Transcender/Salvator” for *Waaqa*), the Festival of ‘Finding of the True Cross of Jesus Christ’ (which in fact is non-entity or inexistent), a festival known nowhere. In fact, it was twisted, counterfeited and adopted into local Biblical dogma by the Orthodox Church around the second half of the 19th century, and conducted few days before the September *Irreeč’aa/Irreessaa Malkaa* of the Oromo (and, until early 20th century by other Cushites, too). We are also told about the bi-annual Jewish Festival of “Passover” though we’re not told as to where and when (era) it was/is held or whether it is being observed today, too. The Oromo know and practice from antiquity to present day (see Gidada 2001) this festival as *Ast’a Baallii* or *Ast’a Makkoo Billii*, literally “the Memorial Insignia of Makkoo Billii” especially the ritual of burning of the fireball of the *Ast’a-Booraa* (accented as *T’oomboora* or *T’aabooree*, also called *Ġudž’aa* in other areas), with a bunch of tall wooden ‘candle’ that each celebrant burnings with himself/herself—a ‘candle’ that is burnt in traversing or crisscross fashion (*Irira č’ea*), accompanied by extravaganza, dances, songs, etc, etc. This relaxation time is full of festivals—*Ṭaabooree* the blessing ceremony for lads; *Ġudž’aa/Ingicč’aa* the blessing of belles; *Moo’a* (also *Baakkoo*, after Maakkoo Billii) the ritual of blessing of the ancestors for the good inheritance we got from them; *Booradičča/Borantičča* the ritual of blessing adult men; *Ġaarii Loonii* for blessing our useful animals; *Ġaarii Qe’e* or *Ġaarii Kočii* for blessing our residence area; *Ġaarii Mid’aani* the blessing of our farms, etc.

The so-called Egyptian ISIS/OSRIS [*Irreeč’aa / Adeedee*²⁶] must be this ritual. One great scholar (Higgins 1927:748) speculated this earlier: “Jesus Christ, as I have before stated, is called by the Arabians *Issa*. This is nothing but a form of Isis, [Hebrew] *iso*, to save” (Higgins 1927: 748). It is likely that Meroe was center of these *Irreeč’aa/Irreessaa* and *Ast’a-Booraa* Rituals in the antiquities, given the pervasive piles of antique ashes across the Meroeland. If we are convinced that

²⁶ We have to iterate that Indo-Semitic/European turns Oromo /d/ or /d’/ to /s/ or /z/.

Egyptian hieroglyphics duplicates the pictogram to represent the morphological process of reduplication (repetition of a morpheme/syllable) in a word/concept, as some Egyptologists speculate, then the two Meroitic/Egyptian pictograms in the above figure (Fig 2), must be reduplication of the arm of the lion, i.e., one forearm juxtaposed after one hind-arm. If that is true, we can consider the Oromo measurement term *d'umd'uma* 'an arm as a cubit, ell', a reduplication of the morpheme *d'uma* 'end, ultimacy, apocalypse', an allomorphic variant of *duβduβa* 'hind part, behind', a reduplication of *duβa* 'after-death, after, later; hinder, back' (Foot 1913: 17). All these co-incidence between, at least, Egyptian/Meroitic and Oromo cannot be considered as similarity 'by chance'.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The general aim of this paper was to test if the Meroitic language is really, as claimed by 'scholars', mysterious, unclassified, non-Africa, or not a family of Cushitic—the origin of civilization and rulers of the old, three continents long before the formation of classical Athens (James 1954; Houston 1926). Moreover, it was aimed at inquiring into the claim that the Meroes and the Cushite, as claimed by few Abyssinico-Semitist 'scholars', were civilized by classical immigrants who cruised over the Red Sea deep into 'Axum' and built 'Axumite civilization'. As the great scholar Gerald Massey (Massey 1907) articulated, Eurocentric scholar has to but call it bull-/cow-worship to pre-Christian/pre-colonial African zoophilism (devotion to and respect for animals) and zoomorphism (use of animals in arts), hence, their social epistemological, semiotical and grammatological projects of what I call, out of lack of better terminology, *zoomorphologization* (i.e., idea-naming or calquing after (name of) animals) and *zoosemotactic*, i.e., symbolization, figuritivization or signification of literary or non-literary meanings and social institutional or epistemological concepts by animals, their anatomy or simulacra. So liberal a scholar, Bekerie (1997) admits that Orthodox Christianity doctrine never allows any form of representation of the real world with signs, symbols or simulacra of animals,

birds, plants, or rock arts since it considers this as “pagan” worshiping of what it calls *t’a’ot* i.e., ‘three dimensional objects’ or ‘gods’. In effect, Europeans themselves did confirm that the Orthodox Church of Abyssinia “traditionally despised manual work” (Norberg 1977: 36). How can one practice (social) semiosis or philosophize under such a condition?

Conclusively, the above lexico-grammatical analyses show strong form-meaning correspondence between Meroitic and Afan Oromo. We have seen that Meroitic and Old Nubian lexico-grammar, the phonology, the grammatical particles and structures, the semantic and cultural-philosophical meanings all significantly correspond. Beyond Meroitic, Afan Oromo serves as bridge between Meroitic, Egyptian and Old Nubian as was seen in numerous form-meaning correspondences across all these languages. It is so striking that the ritual, moral, legal, epigraphic, etc., terminologies have changed little or not at all, albeit external paradigm transliterates or translates under its own linguistic (mother-tongue) and social-background biases, usually dogmatically. The Meroitic as well as Egyptian and Old Nubian researchers/decipherers inserted vowels (at word initial, medial, or final) arbitrarily, in trial and error. This is normally expected for the writing systems of all these ancient/classical languages/texts did not record vowels.

Secondly, the Meroe-Nubian-Oromo languages cognates we have seen so far can be explained, but only one of the following interpretations can do this. One might suggest ‘chance’. This needs no attempt of falsification for it speaks in and for itself—that only ‘chance’ can’t produce all these patterned cognates. Second interpretation is borrowing. This is less likely, for the simple reason that the spatiotemporal distantiation is incredible to imagine. Furthermore, one might well wonder how possibly Oromo could borrow all these form-content/-semantic structures while ‘Semitic’ languages in-between (areally) didn’t. The third explanation is genetic i.e. common, (proto-)language/proto-culture from which Oromo descended. For now, this is the only plausible explanation. It can be

concluded that, as was originally anticipated, Meroes are not different from the Cushites. As was initially hypothesized, Meroitic civilization is doubtlessly victimized by colonial mentality, ‘hegemonic epistemology’ that elevates a single perspective while silencing other sources of information and exploits ‘argument from silence’—“ the belief that if something has not been found, it cannot have existed in significant quantities” (Bernal 1987: 9).

Although the origin of the form “Meroe” is not yet clear, it can be speculated that it might be anagram or alchemy of the Oromo self-identification “Oromo” (*Oromooḍa>Oromooṭa*, plural) or the hypocoristic-diminutive “Oromee”. Accurately, many classical anthropologists and philologists defined ‘Oromo’ as ‘free people’ (Werner 1914; Phillipson 1916). It is the substantive, PL.ANIM form of *râ* ‘to be in motion, to be free’ or the extended *Horro* ‘an Oromo moiety, a confederation, and a person name’, *hurṛā* ‘to set, be free; to fly, splinter’, *ḥurri* ‘cloud, fog; Horus, horoscopes’, all of which are live vocabulary since ancient Egyptian times. In the first half of the 19th century, Krapf (quoted by Robinson 1933: 314) defined the Oromo self-identification “Ormo” or “Iṣma Oromo” as “Son of Man”, ‘men (similarly to the ancient Egyptians)’.” Gardiner (1927: 61) deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphic for ‘man’ as *REMETH*. Given the trial and error insertion of vowels (initial, medial or final) by the Meroitic-Egyptian texts decipherers, this can be interpreted with high level of surety as *Oromod’a* ‘Oromo.COP.PL’, “(We are) the Oromos” (it is likely that both Meroitic and Egyptian languages are Null-Subject or PRO-drop like Afan Oromo and other Cushitic). Also, the Egyptian consonantal series *md.t rmt* is translated, literally, ‘the thing of man’, appropriately ‘mankind” (Tovar 2010: 262). Again this is like the popular cultural expression/sememe *Mad’itṣa Oromooṭaa* ‘the kernel/genesis/dwelling place of the Oromos’ (for more on the mythical-symbolic concept *mad’itṣa/meedhicha*, see Gidada 1984; Baxter, Hultin & Triulzi 1996).

Interestingly, Smith (2009) deciphered the Meroitic lexical item *abr* and interpreted as ‘man’ (note the rhotic *r~l*). This might be the Oromo neuter

multitudinal and solidarity marking terms *obo/o* ‘brethrens, germane brothers-sisters’ or *obolésa* ‘brother’ or *obolétī* ‘sister’. This word is a common toponym and ethnonym in the ancient Nubia, from which, no doubt, the Greek *polis* or – *polis* came. In the ancient/classical times, Horapollo (1840) wrote what he calls ‘the scripts of the Egyptian race’, which clearly points to Oromo *worra obollo* (*worra/ōrra* ‘race, family’, *hoṛa* ‘progenies’). This document, though we cannot analyze here for timespace constraints, is abounded with Oromo symbology, wisdom literature and social semiosis.

Finally, it is important to consider the wider implications of the findings of this study. Are really Egyptian and Meroitic dead? Or, were they, rather, displaced from parts of their homelands or they re-constructed their identity/culture in situ? May be their ‘death’ has been fabricated? Why are Ethiopic documents still kept too secretively? How did the Oromo and African Cushites lose their ancient philosophical and writing systems/documents? Did the Oromos really invade, from south, Abyssinians to their north in the 16th century as claimed? Or, were they rather pushed southwards and westwards by Roman Empire, led and armed, initially, by Portuguese in their mission to uproot ‘paganism’ and ‘atheism’ from their roots, a mission accomplished by Euro-Abyssinian army led by “King” Menelik II around 1900? What bearings do these narratives have on contemporary Ethiopian/Horn of African/Mid Eastern political, religious, cultural and ethnic relations?

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